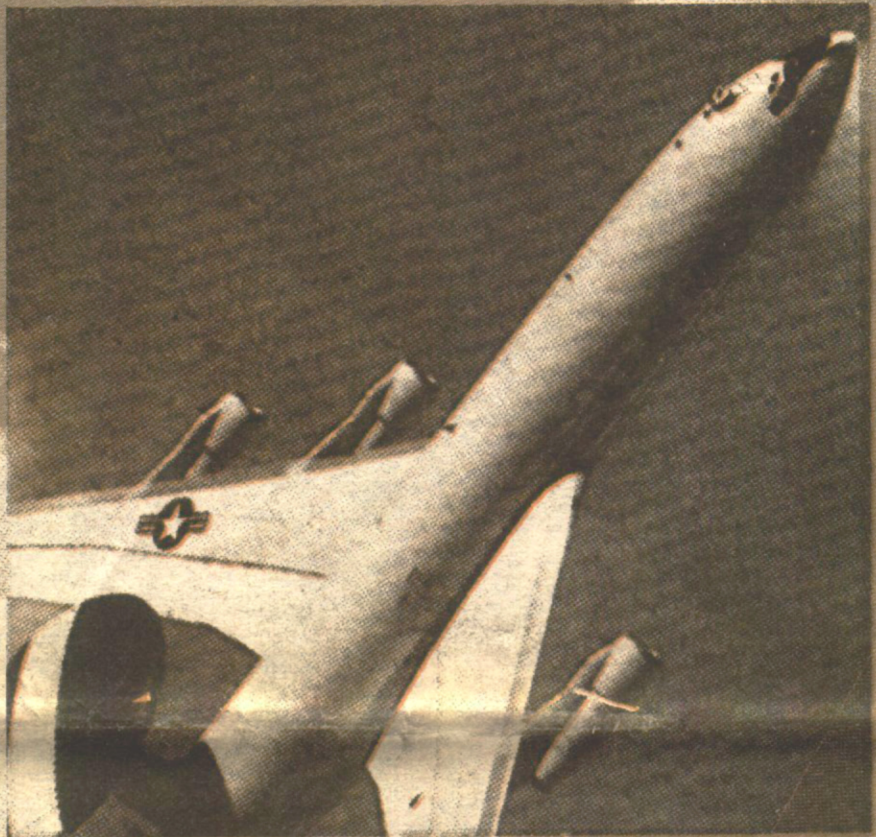


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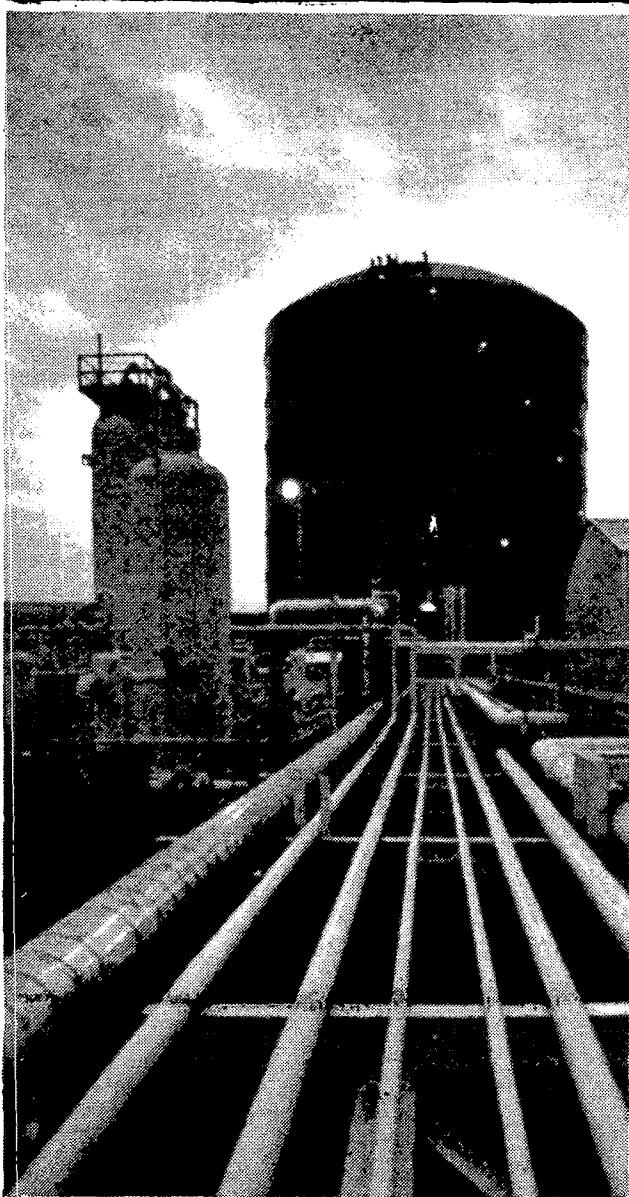


Alexander Cockburn
reports on the
AWAC controversy
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SQUATTERS

As building occupiers clash with police
in West Berlin, demonstrators in three U.S. cities
move into abandoned homes.

THE INSIDE STORY



Reagan may have to back off on gas price decontrol

By David Moberg

Ronald Reagan is finding it progressively tougher to deliver on one of his major campaign pledges: lifting all price controls from natural gas. The budget and tax cuts have, of course, used up time and political capital, which is getting scarcer with the new round of proposed cuts. But there has also been such widespread anxiety about the effects of rapidly removing gas controls—among many business leaders and Republican politicians as well as labor and consumer groups—that Reagan's chances of winning in what would certainly be a bruising congressional battle are steadily declining.

The reason is simple: decontrol would have far-reaching and frequently devastating economic impact. It would disrupt many industries, exacerbate regional shifts and inequities, add two to three percent to the annual inflation rate and shift as much as \$370 billion from consumers of gas to producers from 1982 to 1985—drastically cutting individuals' standards of living and depressing the economy by eliminating nearly 860,000 jobs (or 3.4 million person-years of employment over the next four years).

Constituents in many Republican districts would be hard hit. As a result, opponents of decontrol think that they can break up the conservative bloc in the House at the very least and stop decontrol. Proponents of decontrol are now working behind the scenes to consolidate their backing by patching up differences between gas producers and the other two major segments of the industry, the pipelines and the retail distribution companies, and to figure out ways to redeem the huge campaign contributions that Reagan got from gas producers without suffering grave political losses in 1982.

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The 1978 Natural Gas Policy Act (NGPA) established nearly two dozen pricing categories that are to be steadily increased until 1985. At that time, all gas discovered since 1977 would be decontrolled, and old gas would be governed by existing contracts (most of which include some escalator clause to push prices up to or above oil price levels when decontrol occurs). Currently, all gas discovered in very deep wells—below 15,000 feet—is free of price controls. The aim of the act was to price gas equivalent to oil. But at the time oil was selling for \$15 a barrel; now it's more than double that price. Decontrol advocates fear that if they don't accelerate the rate of decontrol, the spread in price between oil and gas in 1985 under NGPA controls will be so great that the president will be pressured to invoke the act's executive authority to continue controls—exactly what advocates of control hope will happen.

Under NGPA controls gas prices have been shooting upwards at a rate of more than 30 percent last year, half again greater than the rate of increase during the previous decade. Even without decontrol, the cost of heating this winter in the 60 percent of the nation's homes that use gas will rise by an average of 25 percent to \$398, according to the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition (C/LEC). If accelerated decontrol is enacted this winter, gas bills will double by next year, compared to this past winter. For most moderate and low-income families this would more than wipe out anything they could anticipate from the Reagan tax cuts.

But this massive redistribution of wealth to the energy industry would also hurt many businesses and further worsen the still-depressed economies of the Midwest (which is why the heavily Republican Midwest Governors Association came out against decontrol). Farmers would pay more for fertilizer, irrigation, crop drying and other tasks, boosting the price of food. A wide variety of industries—from chemicals to metals to automobiles—would feel increased costs in the tens of billions of dollars that would either be shifted to more tightly strapped consumers or taken out of corporate profits or workers' wages and transferred to oil and gas company coffers. (The major gas producers are familiar: they're mainly the big oil companies. And the top gas producers sell slightly more than half the nation's gas.)

Even with controls, prices are rising.

Gas prices have been rising under NGPA "faster than expected," according to the American Gas Association. One reason for this is that pipelines have been buying more of the totally decontrolled deep gas at an average of over \$6 per thousand cubic feet (Mcf)—and sometimes as much as \$9/Mcf at a time when the average cost of all gas at the wellhead is just under \$2/Mcf. Though such high-priced gas makes up only about 4 percent of all gas sold, it contributes 12 percent to the total cost.

Why should pipelines be willing to pay such high prices? There's no shortage: demand has been steady, because of conservation and economic slowdown and many pipelines are forced to take gas that their normal customers don't need under what is called the "take or pay" contract provisions. Some lower-cost wells have even been temporarily capped. (Long-term supply prospects are even brighter: giant new reserves in previously little-explored deep strata are being discovered in many areas.)

Any increased cost of gas can be automatically passed through to the final consumer. And a pipeline with some low-cost old contracts can roll in the new, expensive gas with only a small final hike. That helps to boost prices of any producing subsidiary it has drilling

deep wells. Also, since there is no incentive to bid on prices—it's all passed through—and since pipelines and utilities are most concerned about assuring a steady flow of gas, there are limited marketplace pricing pressures. One of the few constraints comes from industrial boiler users who can switch to residual fuel oil, which currently is cheaper than much gas. Fear of losing these customers is one of the reasons utilities have tended to oppose accelerated decontrol; it is also one reason why they have made "off-system" sales to such users at prices below what they charge homeowners. Finally, because pipelines or utilities cannot easily switch from one gas field to another, there really isn't a free market in bidding for new gas.

The illusion of a free market.

Ultimately, the significance of all this complicated and wacky pricing is simple: the natural gas industry is not a fully competitive industry. Most of its residential consumers are captives, and so to a large extent are the utilities themselves. So the advocates of a "free market" solution through decontrol are piping an illusory, ideological tune.

Even if the gas industry approximated a free market, the world price of oil is not a free-market price in any classic sense. So it is absurd to take that as the standard for natural gas, which is far cheaper to produce in any case. Second, the common conservative argument that all energy should be priced at an equivalent price for the same amount of energy (the BTU equivalent price) is not only not a free-market conclusion but also makes sense only from the standpoint of the integrated oil companies that control oil, coal, natural gas and other energy sources and want to keep a floor under energy prices. "It's like saying that steak and hamburger should be priced the same since they have the same amount of protein," Edwin Rothschild of Energy Action quips.

C/LEC studies indicate also that most families below the median income have already made what conservation response they can: higher gas prices will deprive them of money to take further conservation steps, and high interest rates—pushed up by decontrol—and enhanced inflation, will make impossible to borrow for conservation, either.

Congressman Phil Gramm (D-Tex.), the leading "boll weevil," has introduced a bill that would accelerate price increases, immediately decontrol all gas from wells drilled after next January 1 and decontrol all gas after 1985. This resembles a late July cabinet policy group proposal, but Reagan has not yet taken his stand. Despite his pledge to veto any windfall profits tax on natural gas, there is growing speculation that Reagan may opt for that, not only as a way of making decontrol more politically acceptable but also as a way of financing MX missiles and the successor to the B-1 bomber while balancing the budget. It would be a doubly regressive tax in that case, and would not reduce the crushing personal hardship, economic dislocation and inflationary pressures that decontrol entails. If all else fails, Reagan might prod the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to accelerate decontrol administratively.

Meanwhile, Republicans and conservative Democrats in areas likely to suffer most are facing a well-organized grass-roots pressure campaign from the AFL-CIO and C/LEC. Already they have won pledges from 12 House Republicans and nearly 80 Democrats to oppose decontrol, and campaigns are underway with 140 other members of Congress. It could be the first major battle that Reagan loses or, fearing the consequences, even refuses to engage.

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IN THESE TIMES

Can we bring back the Golden Age?

By John Judis

WASHINGTON

FOUR YEARS AGO, THE KEMP-Roth tax cut proposal, drafted by supply-side economists Norman Ture and Paul Craig Roberts, was greeted with loud guffaws by economists, members of Congress and the business press. This year, Ronald Reagan appointed Ture and Roberts to the Treasury Department, and the Congress passed a tax bill modeled on Kemp-Roth.

Last October, too, guffaws greeted Sen. Jesse Helms' (R-N.C.) bill to create a gold commission that would study whether a return to the gold standard was feasible. But last spring Reagan appointed the commissioners, who have already met twice. *Business Week* has devoted a cover story to gold, and stalwart opponents of the gold standard like Paul McCracken and Alan Greenspan are beginning to float compromise gold pro-



The gold bugs' historical analogies are faulty. Crediting gold for price stability confuses cause and effect.

posals. Are we seeing Kemp-Roth all over again?

Even before it has gone into effect, Kemp-Roth, combined with the Federal Reserve's tight money policies, has begun to wreak havoc in interest rates and inflation. A new gold standard could prove even more dangerous to the American and world economy.

There have always been some people who advocate a return to the gold standard. Libertarians like economist Murray Rothbard have argued that a pure gold standard—with private currencies in gold as well as international convertibility of national currencies to gold—is the only way to restore a free market in international economic relations.

But now the gold standard has found a champion among the same supply-side economists who proposed the Kemp-Roth tax cuts. (In *These Times*, Jan. 21, 1981.) Jude Wanniski, Jack Kemp, Arthur Laffer and Lewis Lehrman have argued that tax cuts combined with a return to the gold standard would create economic growth and price stability. They argue largely by historical analogy. "Inredeemable paper money has always been accompanied by unbalanced budgets, high inflation and high interest rates. But the true gold standard has been associated with balanced budgets, reasonable price stability and low interest rates," drugstore magnate Lehrman noted in a *Wall Street Journal* column last July.

True and false.

Lehrman and other gold bugs do not regard the Bretton Woods gold standard, which ruled international finance from 1945 to 1971, as a "true gold standard." During that period, only the U.S. pledged to convert its currency to gold (at \$35 an ounce), and only upon the demand of foreign creditors. In 1964, the Federal Reserve finally abandoned in law what it had long abandoned in practice: its obligation to back domestic dollars with gold.

Lehrman's golden age is 1879 to 1913, when the U.S. and other major capitalist countries operated on a full gold standard. Gold coins made up a large proportion of the currency and paper money was universally convertible into gold. Between 1880 and 1913, where figures are available, the overall increase in American prices was about 5 percent.

Lehrman contrasts 1879 to 1913 with 1971 to 1981 when the U.S. has been

completely off the gold standard and consumer prices have more than doubled.

According to Lehrman and Wanniski, the gold standard would work as follows: U.S. dollars would be pegged to a certain amount of gold (gold currently sells for about \$400 an ounce). The Federal Reserve System would be committed to redeeming dollars in gold and would thereby have to limit the amount of currency available according to the availability of gold. As the amount of gold in circulation increases at about 2 percent a year, the American money supply would increase at about 2 percent a year, and inflation would be held in check.

The supply-siders also claim that by making American currency "honest,"

the gold standard would destroy inflationary expectations and drive down interest rates. This would in turn help balance the budget by reducing the interest the federal government annually has to pay on the national debt. "The financial crisis we are now going through will be ended," Wanniski concluded in a *New York Times* op-ed piece. "The dollar will be as good as gold."

At the Republican convention in July 1980, the supply-siders got a platform plank pledging the party to "the restoration of a dependable monetary standard." After Reagan's election, Wanniski and Kemp began agitating for Lehrman to become secretary of the treasury and failing that, undersecretary for monetary affairs. When they lost the Lehrman battle—monetarist Beryl Sprinkel, an arch foe of the gold standard, was given the undersecretary post—they focused their efforts on the tax package and on setting up a gold commission.

Last spring, Reagan announced the creation of the gold commission. The financial press saw it as a sop to the gold bugs, which would effectively bury the

issue by putting it in the hands of a private commission controlled by Sprinkel and Treasury Secretary Regan. While Lehrman and Texas Rep. Ron Paul, a libertarian, were included in the commission, the other 15 members, including Rep. Henry Reuss (D-Wisc.), economist Paul McCracken and three Federal Reserve governors, were deemed to be very hostile or at best indifferent to the gold standard. As if to foreclose the issue altogether, Regan appointed Anna Schwartz, the coauthor with Milton Friedman of the landmark *Monetary History of the U.S.*, as the chief of staff. Schwartz and Friedman are the main proponents of the monetarist argument that the only solution to inflation is a money supply carefully managed by the Federal Reserve.

At the first meeting of the commission, July 16, Sprinkel, standing in for Regan, attempted over Paul's and Lehrman's objections to keep the meetings private. But pressure from Helms, the *Wall Street Journal* (which filed a freedom of information suit) and from Reagan himself forced Sprinkel and Regan to back down and make the commission's meetings public. Prior to its Sept. 18 meeting, a cover story appeared in *Business Week* in which it was reported that Reagan had lectured Alan Greenspan, Citicorp chairman Walter Wriston, former Treasury Secretary George P. Schultz and tax lobbyist Charles Walker on the advisability of a gold standard.

The reason for the new interest in gold was the failure of Wall Street to respond positively to the first stage in the supply-side program. During the summer interest rates continued to climb, the long-term bond market virtually dried up and prospects of a new recession loomed on the horizon. Wall Street's message to the president largely concerned the size of his defense budget and his tax cuts, but Reagan, unwilling to revoke his tax cut or make anything except token cuts in the defense budget and social security, has begun to look elsewhere for a solution.

Platform of gold.

At the Sept. 18 meeting of the Gold Commission, held in the Treasury Department's marble-pillored Cash Room, it became apparent that the gold bugs were no longer an insignificant minority. A procedural debate over whether to extend the commission's life to Jan. 1, 1982—as Keynesian gold foe Reuss and the monetarists from the Federal Reserve preferred—or to extend it to next July—as Lehrman and Paul preferred, was revealing. Regan tried to offer a compromise of March 31, but it was defeated, and Lehrman's July proposal split the commission eight-to-eight.

Continued on page 8



Drugstore magnate Lewis Lehrman insists that a return to the gold standard would also mean a return to balanced budgets and low interest rates.

IN SHORT

Blockhead economics

The Reagan administration's effort to give more control over federal aid programs to local governments may lead to a "new wave of waste, fraud and abuse," according to a study released recently by the National Citizens' Monitoring Project. The project, which is sponsored by 75 organizations ranging from the National Urban League to the League of Women Voters, worked with citizens' groups in 43 areas to examine how their local governments were administering the \$4-billion Community Development Block Grant program, a grim precursor to the first wave of Reagan-era block grants that went into effect Oct. 1.

The researchers discovered that "CD" funds, which can be spent on a variety of projects such as housing rehabilitation and street construction, have been eluding their intended recipients—poor people. In addition, the study noted, the local administrative costs of the program are too high (accounting for as much as half of total CD funds for some housing rehabilitation programs in Los Angeles); monitoring of the funds by both local governments and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has been "abysmal"; and local citizens have had little involvement in planning and evaluating the program.

"Instead of addressing the housing and community needs of the poor," said Paul Bloyd, director of the Monitoring Project, "this money is often being used to help local governments meet far less important needs"—like refurbishing the offices of government officials in Evansville, Ind., or building a gazebo for a park in one suburb near St. Louis.

Cross-country on wheels

Another group with an intense interest in the block grant issue demonstrated in Washington, D.C., last month. Up to 1,000 people, many of them handicapped, participated in a Disabled Americans Freedom Rally that concluded a three-week "caravan" across the country, from Berkeley, Calif., to the capital. Demonstrators told D.C. mayor Marion Barry and congressional leaders that conversion of specialized federal grants into state block grants may jeopardize education, training and housing programs for the handicapped. Some also warned that the reduction of workplace health and safety regulations would help to send more workers into the ranks of the disabled.

A party goes local

The Citizens Party, claiming that it is now well on its way toward "gaining a voice in local governments across the country," can already claim one solid victory and one near miss. On Sept. 15, Citizens Party candidate Michael Preston, a black educator and community leader, won the three-way, district-wide school board primary in Seattle with 64 percent of the vote. He has the endorsement of the city's two major daily papers, according to a party press release, and his victory in the general election is almost a sure thing. Preston is running on a platform of increased parent and citizen influence in school decision-making, community involvement in establishing curricula and making disciplinary rules, and a better relationship between schools and other youth services. In another school board race, where 12 candidates fought for two seats in Davenport, Iowa, Citizens Party candidate John Sutherland came in third, missing out by just 88 votes.

Jim McClellan, chairman of the Citizen Party's executive committee, commented that "our candidates are addressing the concerns of their local constituents while the Republicans run on the simple fact of being Republicans—they think they have a mandate—and the Democrats pretend they aren't Democrats—they think the Republicans have a mandate too."

Hit a nerve, Doc?

Dental Economics, a professional journal that tells dentists how to make the most of their profession, has warned subscribers not to let copies of the magazine fall into the hands of patients, according to the Zodiac News Service. "This is one magazine that doesn't belong in your waiting room," editor Pat Muchmore (!) cautioned in a recent issue. Some of the material, he explained, "could reinforce the belief that some dentists charge too much for dentistry."

Turning over a new page

Speaking of decay—dental, not urban—you'll notice on the facing page a "briefing" by Michael Jacobson, executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), on the stuff we're made of. (Readers interested in the issues Jacobson raises may want to subscribe to the center's excellent publication, *Nutrition Action*. Write for it at 1755 S Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.) "Briefings" on various topics, from antinuclear activism to gay rights, will appear biweekly in this expanded "In Short" format. Both the added space for short news items and another new feature that will appear in future issues—a roundup of grassroots and campus activities—are geared to improving *In These Times'* coverage of all sorts of state and local events. Let us know what you think of all this.

—Josh Kornbluth



Anti-Duarte demonstrators clash with Moonies outside San Francisco's Jack Tar Hotel.

Lunch didn't go down well

SAN FRANCISCO—When Salvadoran strongman Jose Napoleon Duarte stopped off here as part of a U.S. tour aimed at generating North American support for his regime, San Franciscans did not sit idly by. In fact, more than 5,000 of them turned out to protest Duarte's reception at the Jack Tar Hotel here on Sept. 27. The demonstration, hastily organized in just a week by local solidarity groups, resulted in the closest thing to a police riot this city has witnessed in more than two years.

As Duarte sat at the head table of a luncheon arranged by the Salvadoran United Patriotic Front, a Palo Alto-based group of pro-junta Salvadorans living in the United States, demonstrators gathered outside. Organized by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the protest included among its number Berkeley mayor Gus Newport, San Francisco supervisor Nancy Walker, Father Cuchulain Moriarty of San Francisco's Catholic Archdiocese and hundreds of Salvadoran political refugees hiding from immigration officials in the predominantly-Latino Mission District.

Inside the hotel, seven union waiters refused to serve lunch to the Duarte supporters, who included representatives of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church and of Omega 66, a small group of anti-Castro Cuban expatriates.

As the protest outside grew to a solid wall of people surrounding the entire square block that the hotel takes up, some 125 police officers on horseback, on small motorcycles or on foot waited nearby.

About 50 members of Moon's Unification Church who showed up to stage a counter-demonstration were outnumbered by more than 100 to one. Several fist-fights broke out between anti-Duarte demonstrators and the Moonies, who cheered "Duarte si, Cuba no" and distributed literature claiming that "CIS-

PES is a Communist front."

Finally, after nearly three hours of mostly peaceful picketing, the police decided to break it up. Without first asking people to disperse, mounted police rode into the throng of protesters, and lines of officers on foot moved in with riot sticks, hitting at protesters, bystanders and the press. Two protesters were injured and six arrested.

At times it seemed the action outside would erupt into the sort of violent clash that followed the well-publicized May 1979 riot that followed the lenient "manslaughter" verdict handed down to former San Francisco supervisor and police officer Dan White for killing popular gay supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. But the anti-Duarte action ended with the protesters gathering at a nearby church for a quick rally and then voluntarily dispersing.

—Marcelo Rodriguez

A new tactic—decapitation

SAN SALVADOR—Industrial decapitation may be the latest tactic to be used by El Salvador's paramilitary death squads in their campaign of terror against suspected leftist sympathizers.

In August some 100 beheadings took place in El Salvador with heads and bodies being discovered around the towns of Santa Ana, Sonsonate and Izalco in the government-controlled western part of the country. These were not the first beheadings in El Salvador by right-wing death squads, but they were unusual in several respects. For one, these heads and bodies had been separated very cleanly, as if by a single stroke. "Some kind of expertise had to be involved in this," said a Salvadoran doctor. The bodies and heads were all dumped alongside roads in different locales, making identification difficult. Of the people killed, only five murder victims were positively identified, though 33 heads and close to 100 bodies have been found. In one case, on Aug. 14, 15 bodies were found at two sites

near Sonsonate. A short time later, 13 heads were found 200 yards away. But none of the heads appeared to match any of the bodies. All the bodies found were either naked or dressed only in underwear. They all appeared very clean, as if they'd been washed, and none showed signs of torture or struggle. There was very little blood.

In the third week of August, two workers at Quality Meats of El Salvador, a slaughterhouse located in the town of Ateos in the department of La Libertad, wrote a letter to the Human Rights Commission saying that they suspected their slaughterhouse was being used at night for executions. Though it only operated four hours a day processing cows and pigs the slaughterhouse's machinery was kept running 24 hours a day to maintain refrigeration. The plant had shut down in October 1979 when it was taken over by the newly nationalized banks of the ruling junta, but had reopened in May 1981. It was guarded by six armed members of the local National Guard battalion and had easy road access to the areas where the heads and corpses had been appearing.

On Friday, Aug. 21, Alberto Pipino, an Argentinian reporter working for the Mexican paper *Uno Mas Uno*, and another foreign reporter visited Quality Meats. There they learned that the manager for Quality Meats from 1977 to 1979 was Hans Christ, while a major stockholder in the company was his brother-in-law, Ricardo Sol-Meza. Hans Christ was recently released on bail from a Miami jail while awaiting possible extradition to El Salvador, where he had been indicted along with Sol-Meza in the Jan. 3 murder of two U.S. land-reform advisors and the head of the Salvadoran agrarian reform institute at the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador. Salvadoran authorities have reportedly dropped charges against Sol-Meza, a wealthy industrialist and former mental patient who has been implicated in several murders, and recent actions by the Salvadoran courts have made Christ's extradition unlikely.

On Saturday, Aug. 22, the day

Nancy McGirr

Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. Please include your address and phone number.

after their visit to the slaughterhouse, armed men began searching San Salvador's major hotels looking for Pipino and the other reporter. The other reporter flew out of the country while Pipino sought refuge in the Mexican embassy. While in the embassy word got out that the security forces were also looking for the two reporters, which tends to suggest National Guard involvement in whatever was going on (or is going on) at Quality Meats of El Salvador. In early September, armed Mexican security men were able to escort Pipino to the Salvadoran airport and fly him out to Mexico.

—David Heivarg

A county may be dumped on



Part of the Berkshires' landscape may come to resemble this radioactive dumpsite in Muxey Flats, Ky.

PITTSFIELD, MA—Berkshire County in western Massachusetts is known for its cultural summers, scenic mountains and rich farmland. It could also, over the next few years, become known as the seventh location in the U.S. to host a low-level radioactive waste site.

Unless Berkshire County residents can deadlock House Bill 6877, any one of the county's "favorable" land sites could be used as a regional dump for waste from nine states. If passed in its present form, the bill would authorize state construction of a radioactive waste facility on any land zoned for agricultural or industrial use.

In a November 1980 report to Governor Edward King, the Massachusetts Advisory Council on Radiation Protection recommended that a low-level waste disposal program begin immediately, and that a nuclear waste site be located in a "low-population" area. Since then the state government has been working on a plan to implement the idea. The state is reacting to a 1980 federal court order that called for a multi-state regional agreement on nuclear waste disposal.

While officials claim that a dumpsite would be in a "place of least resistance," the locations of prospective sites have been withheld from the public in order to deter local opposition. Still, groups such as Massachusetts Alert have been organized to alert county and state residents to the issues surrounding

the waste site and to encourage public debate concerning use of their land and the social ramifications of establishing a site in rural Massachusetts.

According to Joan Wattman, county coordinator for the Massachusetts Nuclear Referendum Campaign, the issue is a democratic rather than an anti-nuclear one. The purpose of the statewide campaign is to place a referendum on the 1982 ballot requiring that no new nuclear power plants or nuclear waste disposal sites be established without the express approval of Massachusetts voters.

Town officials are also taking measures to protect their territories from unwanted dumpsites by enforcing the premise of home rule. Local planning boards have called hearings to amend the zoning bylaws to ban nuclear dumpsites, though some local boards are writing regulations that would permit a site under specified conditions.

—Melanie Scaduto

Public Citizen faces the '80s

WASHINGTON—At least 1,000 people joined Ralph Nader and his associates on the Sept. 25-26 weekend at a two-day national conference held to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Public Citizen network and to develop strategies for continued citizen activism in the '80s.

Entitled "Taking Charge: The Next Ten Years," the conference was structured around the theme of "regaining control of what is ours." Conference-goers, including about 200 students active in the campus-based Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) around the country, heard presentations by John Kenneth Galbraith, I.F. Stone, civil rights activist James Farmer, futurist Hazel Henderson, author Studs Terkel, Ralph Nader himself and dozens of prominent activists from within and outside the Nader network.

In workshops on issues such as public lands, media access, insurance and pension funds, energy, local government, health care and cooperatives, panelists and participants explored ways to win greater citizen access to and control over the nation's vast public resources.

The network of Nader-affiliated organizations has mushroomed since the founding of the original research group, the Center for the Study of Responsive Law, in 1969. It now includes the six Washington-based Public Citizen groups as well as the student PIRGs on college campuses in more than 20 states and affiliates such as the Pension Rights Center, the Clean Water Action Project, the Center for Auto Safety and the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting. One recurrent theme of the conference, articulated most clearly by Don Ross, a long-time Naderite and current director of New York PIRG, was how far the citizen movement had progressed in the '70s toward the creation of effective institutions for ongoing citizen action.

Ralph Nader emphasized in his keynote address that making citizen access and opposition even more permanent is central

to his strategy for the coming decade. Nader pointed to the creation of a statewide Citizens Utility Board (CUB) in Wisconsin, which represents residential utility consumers before the Public Service Commission and the state legislature, as a model (*In These Times*, Sept. 16). According to Nader, CUBs and similar watchdog organizations for other industries can provide a "cheap continual communications link that works like a radar scanner."

The conference workshops that sparked the greatest enthusiasm and interest focused on grassroots organizing and on local government. The organizing workshop—led by Heather Booth of the Midwest Academy, Wade Rathke of ACORN, Lois Gibbs of the Love Canal Homeowners' Association and Gene Karpinski of Colorado PIRG—examined the potential for local and statewide organizing in the Reagan years and confronted what Heather Booth called the need to regain "the crusading spirit based on issues." The local government workshop—chaired by Lee Webb of the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies and led by Derek Shearer and by current and former mayors Bernard Sanders of Burlington, Vt., Ruth Goldway of Santa Monica, Calif., and Dennis Kucinich of Cleveland—was packed to overflowing and continued a half hour over time. Earlier in the conference, Don Ross had argued that the Reagan administration's emphasis on returning power to the states meant that state and local activism would be especially critical in the coming years. Participants in both these sessions agreed.

There was a noticeable spirit of accommodation and even mutual respect at this conference, given the rich history of tension among leftists during the '70s. Though this was a Nader conference, a concerted effort had been made to invite speakers and panelists from across a broad spectrum of activists.

Despite the Reagan administration's direct attack on citizen and worker protections that have been among the Nader movement's most important accomplishments of the past decade, this conference had a festive, even optimistic air to it. For former Naderites, it was a pleasant reunion. PIRG students were excited to meet likeminded people from other campuses. The tone was set during the first day's luncheon when Gray Panther leader Maggie Kuhn presented Nader with a stuffed blue giraffe for his consistent willingness to stick his neck out, and when what was supposed to be a toast to Nader turned into a roast by several past and present Nader's Raiders. The celebration continued that evening with a concert by singer/activists Fred Small and Pete Seeger and ended with an entertaining final session of debates on media access and corporate mergers moderated by popular TV personality Phil Donahue.

The mix of programming and panelists seemed to be effective. Tufts University student Allison Barlow explained, "We all came here to meet other people, to get some information, but most of all to get rejuvenated so that we can go back and start again. It worked for me."

—Richard Kazis



Even after Reagan's retreat on the ketchup rule, school lunchrooms don't provide the healthiest stuff for children to eat.

Briefing: Thoughts on food

Food is deceptive. It looks so attractive. It tastes so good. Yet eating too much of certain kinds of foods can kill you.

In contrast to cigarettes and many pollutants, which are inherently toxic at any level, small amounts of many foods and food ingredients may be perfectly safe, but large amounts may be harmful. The Surgeon General of the United States and other authorities have said that the typical American diet—high in fat, cholesterol, refined sugar and sodium, and low in dietary fiber—is contributing to heart disease, stroke, tooth decay, diabetes and probably cancer of the colon and breast. In all, diet contributes to diseases that account for half of all deaths in the United States.

The federal government has gotten more and more involved in regulating the composition and marketing of food, despite catcalls from the sidelines that Uncle Sam should stay out of our refrigerators. But now conservatives in the White House and the Congress are trying to reverse some of the progress that has been made in the past few years.

For example, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) has introduced a bill, S. 1442, that would effectively repeal the anti-cancer Delaney clause, make it easier to get new additives into food and harder to get unsafe additives out of food and change the legal definition of "safe" so that much more evidence would be needed before a chemical would be considered unsafe. There is strong industry support for this bill, which was authored in part by the American Meat Institute, the National Soft Drink Association and other trade groups. Senate hearings are expected in November; House hearings later in the fall or next year.

One specific additive about which scientists are becoming more concerned is caffeine. While caffeine occurs naturally in coffee and tea, it is added to Coke, Pepsi, Sunkist,

Mountain Dew, Tab and other soda pops. Though a Coke has only one-third as much caffeine as a cup of coffee, the impact of that caffeine on a child is about the same as a cup of coffee on an adult. Caffeine can cause insomnia, jitters and increased physical activity.

There is also good evidence that caffeine consumed by pregnant women can cause birth defects and that it may contribute to fibrocystic breast disease.

The Food and Drug Administration wants to continue allowing caffeine in soda pop. The coffee industry, meanwhile, is gearing up for a multi-million-dollar p.r. and ad campaign to debunk the health hazards associated with caffeine and to take the pressure off the FDA.

The Jelly Bean administration's recent idea to allow ketchup and relish to substitute for the fruit and vegetable requirement in the school lunch program was scuttled because of unprecedented public protest and ridicule. The measure would also have allowed cupcakes and cookies to be served in place of bread and cut portions of milk, vegetables and meat by as much as one-third.

The administration's hasty retreat on the school lunch package, temporary though it may be, indicates that public protest and organizing can still succeed on occasion. Today ketchup and relish; tomorrow the MX.

—Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.



Greg Meyer/CSF

IN THE NATION

URBAN POLICY

Squatters protest housing programs in three U.S. cities



Calvin Cook and Rev. Bill Thomas pry boards off the front door.

By Jeanie Wylie

DETROIT

A VICE PRESIDENT OF THE National Bank of Detroit leaned forward across a conference table, all Detroit was visible beyond the huge plate-glass windows.

"We tend to think, here at the bank, that we're heading toward another problem in Detroit," Daniel Voydanoff said with urgent understatement.

The problem, as outlined by Voydanoff, is that as inflation eats away at the income of the poor, people are failing to pay their rent, landlords are abandoning their property and the area's housing stock is deteriorating.

The solution that comes most immediately to the minds of bankers is to empty the rental properties and substitute wealthy tenants, though Voydanoff con-

cedes that this might just shuffle the city's problems to the suburbs as the affluent and the poor trade places.

One alternative to the gentrification programs—which have already displaced thousands of low-income city residents in favor of young professional tenants—is homesteading. City-administered homesteading programs allow low and moderate-income families to take possession of property that has fallen into the city's hands, if they will rehabilitate and live in them.

Urban homesteading was given federal sanction in 1974 when the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) initiated a program that allows the transfer of HUD-owned properties to local governments that provide a homesteading program. In many northeastern cities, and particularly in New York, "sweat equity" programs are allowing people to take over entire slum-area buildings, earning title to the property by investing hundreds of hours of work.

In mid-September, ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) acted to accelerate homesteading programs in Detroit and Philadelphia by moving four families into abandoned buildings. In both cities, ACORN members charge, city officials had been reluctant to design effective homesteading programs.

"Right now, squatting is a tactic to try to focus attention on the need for local homesteading," Madeleine Talbot, an ACORN organizer in Detroit, explained. "If that program does not get set up very quickly, then squatting will change and become the answer to the housing problem."

In Detroit, ACORN was able to put enough pressure on the city council to persuade it to override a mayoral veto and allocate \$1.2 million in HUD money for homesteading grants and loans. But council members have been unwilling to pass a homesteading ordinance that would free up the monies for home reno-

vation. The money is currently banked, while thousands of homes stand vacant and hundreds of people flock to the landlord/tenant clinic to fight eviction notices.

The Philadelphia story.

In Philadelphia ACORN was able to prove that many of the 1,000 HUD homes released under the city's homesteading program went to developers who illegally rented the properties. After a year of protests, rallies and press conferences, ACORN ousted the city housing director and got a city commitment to turn over 200 houses a month.

Over 25,000 homes in Philadelphia should be eligible for homesteading, Fran Streich, a Philadelphia ACORN organizer, said. But most of these houses are privately-owned, tax-delinquent properties that the city has been slow to take title on through sheriff's sale or condemnation proceedings. Fewer than 1,000 homes have been distributed to 18,000 applicants in five years.

"In August people decided that they were going to squat—they weren't going to wait any longer," Streich explained. The squatters have told the city that unless it lives up to its promise of 200 houses a month, another 50 families will take illegal residence in vacant homes in October.

Publicity surrounding the illegal squat-

plained later that the council members failed to force the city's hand.

"The track record we've had has been very poor on homesteading," city council member Jack Kelley concedes. Under the city's current homesteading program, which has been on the books since 1976, only six homes have been turned over, even though more than 4,000 HUD homes were available. "Nothing comes fast in city government," Kelley added. "If we could get it [a homesteading ordinance] by the first of the year that would be very fast."

The city's director of Community and Economic Development complains that ACORN has a "shotgun-style approach" to homesteading. "We're opposed to planting roses in the desert," Tom Lewis said. "Why plant something out there and nothing else is going to support it and have a renaissance of activity?" he asked, unintentionally calling to mind the controversial "renaissance" plans for Detroit that have already channelled millions of HUD dollars into private, riverfront development projects.

City residents won't wait for the city to put together a professionally-designed homesteading package, which will probably benefit real estate developers the most, Talbot said. "The question is whether they'll be willing to wait at all," she said. "In some neighborhoods there are as many as 100 abandoned houses."



Callie and Calvin Cook paid the St. Louis Land Clearance and Redevelopment Authority \$1 for an abandoned house, but never received title. In late September the Cooks, assisted by about 100 neighbors and ACORN supporters, opened up the house to begin rehabbing.

ting attempts in Philadelphia and Detroit has prompted hundreds of phone calls from people who are "homeless and ready to go," Talbot said. ACORN members in St. Louis staged a similar action last week, and other ACORN groups in Atlanta and Pittsburgh are also making plans to squat.

In Detroit, Lisa Redd, 24, and her infant son were moved into a home that had been empty for three years and vandalized. Since Sept. 16, Redd has worked with family and ACORN members to clean up the house, replace windows and arrange makeshift lighting and heating.

"I feel like it's my home," Redd explained a few days after the city had posted an eviction notice on her door. "My neighbor tells me she feels safer knowing there's somebody in the house, instead of the door swinging back and forth with addicts inside. She has to worry about her granddaughter being around the house. Plus her property values were going down. The house wasn't being taken care of."

Before moving in, Redd learned from the Deeds and Tracts Index that HUD had sold the house to the city in 1980 and that the city had no plans for it. Then she joined ACORN members and "doorknocked" the block to make sure the neighbors knew her plans to renovate the house and to pressure the city for title.

Within a week four Detroit city council members—all of whom are up for reelection—met with the city's Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) to try to prevent Redd's eviction. Her well-publicized, imminent eviction made the council members take a stand on homesteading, but Redd com-



Neighborhood kids helped clean up the house, which currently has no water or electric service.

That means that everyone knows in a very personal way what the problem is. There is increasing support from church people. We'll probably see more of it around the country."

Jeanie Wylie has reported on neighborhood issues for *In These Times*.

Are Office Environments the Number-One White-Collar Crime?

The hazards of offices are often small, seemingly trivial things. An uncomfortable chair may not seem like a major calamity; neither does stuffy air or a few ringing telephones. But put an office worker in a bad chair in a noisy, stuffy office...require that worker to perform a dead-end job for low pay on a computer terminal with a dirty screen made worse by the harsh glare from fluorescent lights...add a dash of pressure—a ruthless supervisor, for example, or economic pressures or family problems—and you've got an explosive situation, the stuff from which headaches and heart attacks are made. That's only the beginning. The modern office causes or contributes to allergies, back pain, cataracts, dermatitis, eyestrain, fractures, and on and on down through the alphabet.

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IN THE WORLD



The sign on this occupied building declares that students from the planning department of a local university are assisting the squatters in a gardening project.

GERMANY

The divided city: squatters and cops face off in Berlin

By Tom Sutton

WEST BERLIN

"GERMANY, GERMANY, all is over, we are the Turks of tomorrow." The ominous lyrics of West Berlin's favorite New Wave band now reflect more than the usual level of alienation among the city's youth. On Sept. 22, some 2,000 riot police moved to evict eight illegally occupied houses. In the aftermath, Senator Heinrich Lummer held a press conference in one of the cleared houses to boast of police efficiency. A crowd of squatters gathered outside with pictures of Lummer caricatured as Napoleon. Lummer ordered them dispersed, and the police charged without warning. In the ensuing panic, an 18-year-old squatter was forced into the path of a bus on a busy street. This was only the latest in a long series of clashes with the police, but it was the first death in the 18-month history of Europe's newest squatters' movement.

The escalating tensions are most acutely felt in the old neighborhood of Kruezeburg, home to one-quarter of the 100,000 Turkish immigrants in Berlin and seedbed of the squatters' movement that draws young Germans to this city like a magnet. For it is here—literally in the shadow of the Wall that divided this city 20 years ago—that the squatters and their allies have created the sharpest challenge yet to the cabal of politicians and real estate speculators that dominate West Berlin politics.

Squatting is nothing new in the cities of Europe. In England and Holland it is almost traditional to occupy vacant buildings. But this is Berlin, a city where attitudes toward authority contrast sharply with the ballroom of liberalism of a city like Amsterdam, where squatting began in earnest over a decade ago. A few West Berlin buildings were occupied as early as 1975, but the movement only picked up steam after several days of heavy street fighting with police over attempted evictions in December 1980. Since that time squatting has proceeded apace; during the peak month of activity, February, as many as seven houses a day were occupied. Today there are over 175 occupied

the American experience with urban renewal, the story is all too familiar: against a background of chronic and severe shortage of rental units, those governments pursued a program of *sanierung* (slum clearance), whereby whole sections of certain neighborhoods are designated as "blighted." But no observer familiar with American cities would consider these areas slums; they are primarily made up of solid turn-of-the-century structures showing relatively minor deterioration.

Today, the city's remedy for this ostensible blight has consisted of subsidies to landlords for demolition of existing houses and construction of new, more luxurious ones. The government has also provided some rent subsidies for tenants of the newly constructed buildings. In practice, this policy has meant widespread evictions, apartments and houses standing vacant while their value is enhanced by rampant speculation and consequent rent increases of 300 to 400 percent.

Anarchy in action.

Resistance has taken the radical form of squatting for a number of reasons. First, the city government is widely perceived to be more interested in making profits than in providing shelter, particularly because the city itself owns several development companies and numerous houses. Moreover, the city government has consistently refused to enforce German law that levies big fines against landlords who leave units unrented—which is seen by many as a sign of bad faith. As Ulrich Keiper, a Berlin attorney, put it: "The government has tolerated the occupied houses because they know there is injustice, but in their bad conscience they are willing to let the Sword of Damocles hang over the squatters indefinitely."

Second, there is a severe shortage of affordable rental housing for Berliners. The pinch is most acutely felt by Turkish immigrants and by the young people ar-

lice raids. A great deal is accomplished through this unheralded, day-by-day activity—and it is needed, because the landlord invariably leaves a lot of work to be done.

But one major task that the squatters have only begun to address is building solidarity with the other tenants in their neighborhoods. The legal neighbors, many of them Turkish immigrants reluctant to express their views for fear of deportation, are under heavy pressure in the housing market. In their situation, it is not so easy to distinguish friend from foe. As one housing activist explained: "There's a basic sympathy for the squatters because of the rent situation, which affects everyone, but the alternative lifestyle aspect of the movement goes against the grain of the whole mentality of being clean, orderly and within the law."

This cultural rift has allowed the new government to pursue a strategy of divide and conquer, seeking to convince legal tenants that their living conditions are poor because the squatters have all the good apartments, which will be available for rent only if they are first cleared of undesirables. To counter such arguments, the squatters have initiated efforts to organize tenants' associations independent of city funding and conducive to a real measure of solidarity on housing issues.

The squatters' movement is well-organized; words of an impending police raid will bring hundreds of supporters to the defense of an occupied house at any hour of the day or night, and mass demonstrations regularly draw tens of thousands into the streets—sometimes into the wealthy enclaves where many real estate speculators live. The reactionary Berlin press (almost entirely controlled by one publisher, Axel Springer) has been quick to label the demonstrators "psycho-terrorists," and a minister of Helmut Schmidt's government in Bonn has expressed the fear that people would begin to move out of Berlin. Clearly, the



Under the city's "slum clearance" policies many basically sound buildings have been slated for demolition.

houses in West Berlin.

This situation has lent a crisis atmosphere to the city and radically altered the postwar political landscape—as Secretary of State Alexander Haig discovered Sept. 13 when his visit brought out more than 50,000 demonstrators in the city's largest protest against U.S. policy since the Vietnam war.

A new party, the Alternative List, has developed on the left, forcing the housing issue to the fore and winning nine seats in the city's new representative assembly. And for the first time since 1953, that assembly is not controlled by the Social Democratic Party. Thanks in part to a \$65-million scandal that figured heavily in May's elections, the Christian Democrats now control 65 seats and, in coalition with the FDP, have elected Richard von Weizsacker mayor.

The new conservative city administration inherited a crisis precipitated by the housing policy of successive Social Democratic city governments. To students of

riving from West Germany, but elderly pensioners are affected as well. When people witness perfectly good, structurally sound houses being labelled "slums" and methodically demolished during a period of shortage, they are understandably angered.

Finally, there is the character of the squatters themselves. They comprise a cross-section of West German youth culture, with a particularly strong anarchist element providing leadership in many instances. As one of those leaders, a 23-year-old from Stuttgart, explained it, the squatters see themselves as a cultural vanguard as well as a political movement.

For the squatters, the key to rebuilding houses is to reconstruct the social organizations within them. To this end, a weekly meeting is held for all residents of an occupied building to discuss problems and distribute work assignments. Everyone takes a turn at painting, scrubbing, cooking, carpentering and the ever-necessary tasks of keeping night watch for po-

squatters struck a nerve.

The political tension in Berlin today is palpable. The Alternative List continues to agitate for new housing policies, and now is calling for the immediate resignation of Senator Lummer. Nightly meetings in West Berlin condemn the hard-line government stance, and there have been support demonstrations in Hamburg, Stuttgart and other major West German cities protesting the recent death.

Meanwhile, the squatters continue to build their movement, occupying houses, making them habitable and demonstrating in the process that speculation need not be passively accepted. Simply by their presence in good houses marked for extinction, West Berlin's squatters bring into focus the essential bankruptcy of housing policy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Tom Sutton, a former community organizer for Public Citizen's Congress Watch, was in Berlin this summer.

Gold

Continued from page 3

The September meeting was largely given over to procedural debate and to Schwartz's summary of her staff report on U.S. monetary history, but the deep divisions that separate the gold bugs from both the monetarists and the Keynesians kept obtruding. (Normally, Keynesians like Reuss who advocate congressional control of the Fed, restrictions on the use of bank funds for speculative purposes and increased bank funds for productive uses have little in common with the monetarists.)

Schwartz's history clearly represented the monetarist point of view. According to Schwartz, the periods when the U.S. had been on a pure gold standard, from 1834 to 1861 and from 1879 to 1913, had been characterized by "short-term instability and long-term instability." Within relatively small long-term changes

in prices, there had been steep depressions (18.4 percent unemployment during the 1890s depression), sharp recessions, financial panics and sudden deflation as well as inflation.

Some of the participants seemed thoroughly confused by the arguments. Sen. Harrison Schmitt (R-N.M.) earnestly declared that he couldn't understand how, given the past fluctuations in price of gold, its value could be fixed. "If we could fashion a way the price we set on gold reflects the value we put on goods and services," Schmitt said, "we could have the value of goods and services tied to the gold, which in turn is tied to the value of goods and services in our society." Schmitt evidently assumed that by tying gold to apples or widgets, he could avoid the usual price changes caused by supply and demand or changes in productivity.

But Lehrman and the representatives of the Fed stayed on the subject. Lehrman reasserted his historical argument that "stability in the price level was much better under the gold standard than in the last 10 years." Fed governor

Both sides in this debate agree it may take a recession to stem inflation—with or without a gold standard.

Henry Wallich replied tersely, "You can say the gold standard is a cause of stability. You can say just as well that the gold standard is a consequence of stability."

Instead of replying to Wallich, Paul took a new tack. "It's said that our whole purpose here is to find a way to achieve price stability," he said. "It is my understanding that this is not the ultimate objective—the ultimate objective is to have honesty in money. The power to depreciate is the power to steal."

At this point, Reuss, who had sat through the hearings with a pained look

and had made occasional snide comments, got up and left.

A debate over tactics.

The debate over the gold standard is the opening salvo in the debate within the administration over its own economic program. In his newsletter, Wanniski, never one to avoid debate, remarked that "the public flogging of Beryl Sprinkel would do wonders for the bond market." But the debate is likely to bypass most of the public as well as senators like Schmitt.

The advocates of the gold standard have a thoroughly ahistorical view of capitalism, which they regard as an eternal system whose various stages can be reproduced at will. In the 19th century, the gold standard ensured long-term price stability because of two unique circumstances: the economic supremacy of Great Britain, which made the pound sterling the universal currency and prevented rapid exchanges of gold, and the competitive capitalist business cycle, which made possible price declines that balanced out price increases. The successful operation of the Bretton Woods gold exchange system, which has been more properly called a "dollar standard" system, was based on the unchallenged industrial supremacy of the U.S. As long as the U.S. was superior, countries were willing to hold its currency in their vaults instead of gold. But once the U.S. began running balance-of-trade deficits, countries became less willing to hold dollars. Lyndon Johnson first closed the gold window in 1965 to prevent a run on American dollars, which might have caused an international monetary crisis. Inflation was the cause, not the consequence, of the gold standard's demise. It was the result of the U.S. trying to maintain its financial supremacy in the face of industrial decline.

The monetarists understand this flaw in the gold bug argument. "A necessary condition of returning to a gold standard is the financial environment which the gold standard itself is presumed to create," Alan Greenspan argued in the *Wall Street Journal*. Or, as Wallich put it, the gold bugs confuse causes and consequences.

Some monetarists and supply-siders also understand that their debate is over tactics, not strategy. Both camps agree that inflation should be reduced by reducing money supply growth. In practice, this means reducing inflation by creating a recession. "It may well be that in order to stabilize prices you will have to go through a recession," a candid Milton Friedman told *Business Week*. But Friedman added, in explaining his differences with the gold bugs, "If it is not politically possible to accept that cure without a gold standard, it will not be politically possible to do it with a gold standard."

Most of the supply-siders do not acknowledge the consequence of their own arguments. Like Wanniski, they drape policies that would enrich the already affluent, bankrupt small business and impoverish the worker in the mantle of populism. But Lehrman, a businessman, is more frank. In a *Human Events* interview, Lehrman acknowledged that during 1879 to 1913 "the business cycle had its ups and downs" and branded as "utopians" those who "believed they could banish the business cycle."

In short, both the supply-side gold bugs and the monetarists are arguing for a return to the pre-World War I business cycle as the only means of curbing inflation and restoring industrial profitability. The monetarists charge that the supply-siders' means are impractical: the gold standard is too inflexible in the face of continuing American trade deficits, \$1 trillion in Eurodollars in foreign vaults, and the mounting debts of third-world countries to American banks.

Supply-siders like Lehrman argue that because of the technical complexity of modern money markets and political pressures from below, "the central bank cannot fix the quantity of money in circulation." They argue that gold will accomplish automatically what the Fed could only accomplish deliberately.

It is an argument in which the interests of the greater public—or at least those who might not welcome a return to the 1890s—have yet to be articulated.

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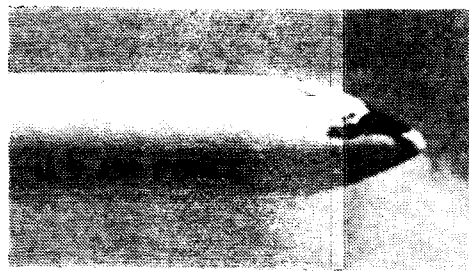
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THE MILITARY

Never mind, they don't work



By Alexander Cockburn

NEW YORK

AS USUAL IN SUCH NATIONAL security debates, the battle over the sale of five AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia is illuminating as much for the things that are being left unsaid as for what is judged appropriate for public consumption.

Publicly the issue is being stated in exalted terms: the security of Saudi Arabia against "external threat," the enhancement of U.S. strength in the Persian Gulf area—these two objectives, as incarnated in the AWACS sale, being set against the presumed threat to Israel's security posed by the all-seeing radar planes.

Barrages of verbiage from politicians and pundits have been laid down on both sides of the issue, which is now portrayed as a fight to the death between the Reagan administration and the Israeli lobby in the United States, with the honor of the Saudi royal dynasty tied to a stake in the middle.

But it is useful, first of all, to look at the real capabilities of the object at the heart of the debate: the Airborne Warning and Control System jet.

Back in the '50s the Pentagon was beginning to embark on the enormously complex and expensive high-technology systems that have, in the view of many critics from both the left and right, not only grossly inflated the military budget but also seriously degraded the fighting ability of U.S. forces. Notable at the time was the \$19 billion wasted on the SAGE (radar for continental air defense) system, which went nowhere.

In the early '60s Harold Brown, then head of the Pentagon's research and development operation, proposed an early version of AWACS, originally designated as an overland radar technology program—an airborne radar system designed to detect at great distance approaching Russian strategic nuclear bombers. The reader may recall that this was the era of the "bomber gap," greatly touted by John Kennedy in his 1960 campaign. After a couple of years Robert McNamara's analysts at the Pentagon concluded that there was no bomber gap at all, and hence no visible necessity for AWACS—because there were no Russian strategic bombers for it to detect.

A bad idea revived.

The AWACS project was nearly killed off at this point. Rescue came with Harold Brown's appointment in the mid-sixties as secretary of the Air Force. Under his guidance AWACS was transmuted into a tactical system in which the planes would not only perform radar monitoring tasks but also closely control U.S. fighters engaged in combat.

Thus it was with two particularly important sponsors, Harold Brown and General David Jones (now chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and previously chief of staff for the Air Force), that AWACS slowly came to fruition through the '70s. Of equal importance of course were the lobbying efforts of Boeing—the prime contractor for the plane—which was in trouble in the early '70s and badly needed extra procurement orders, and also of the prime subcontractor for the radar, Westinghouse.

AWACS is usually referred to as a converted 707. In fact it has only 2 percent parts commonality with the civilian 707. Its prime virtue is allegedly the ability of its radar systems to detect other planes,

both at high and low altitudes, at distances up to 350 miles. "Look-down radar," as it is colloquially referred to, has always been, and still is, a questionable exercise, as it is very hard to distinguish low-flying aircraft from ground clutter. In one NATO exercise, monitors aboard an AWACS plane were suddenly surprised to see streams of unidentified aircraft flying over Frankfurt. These aircraft finally turned out to be fast-moving cars on the *autobahn*.

Secondly, and predictably (given the overcomplexity of its systems), AWACS breaks down a great deal. In fiscal 1979, U.S. AWACS planes were "mission ready" 15 percent of the time. In fiscal 1980 they were mission ready 54 percent of the time. The breakthrough was achieved by lowering the readiness standards. The tests have been more than usually bogus. At the time when the U.S. Air Force, spearheaded by General Jones, was trying successfully to ram AWACS down the throat of NATO, defense ministers from that organization were taken up in an AWACS plane and informed that the radar would monitor two fighters, which were to take off from a carrier, refuel in mid-air and then "attack" the AWACS, which would demonstrate its all-seeing prowess in detecting such maneuvers. All this came to pass. What the impressed NATO minis-

ters did not know was that because of some operational mishap the planes had never taken off from the carrier and that what they had been watching were prefabricated tapes being run through the AWACS radar screens.

The same thing happened when an AWACS was flown to Washington on Sept. 22 of this year to impress members of Congress and staffers. Major General Pietrowski held forth on the wonders of AWACS, neglecting only to mention that the plane's radar had broken down on the way to Washington and that they, too, were watching prefabricated tapes. They might as well have been playing on an electronic war-game machine in the Andrews Air Force Base canteen.

Nor is AWACS second function, fighter-control in combat situations, much esteemed by the fighter pilots—who will be rather in the same position as trapeze artists in a circus being told what to do in mid-air by a man watching through a

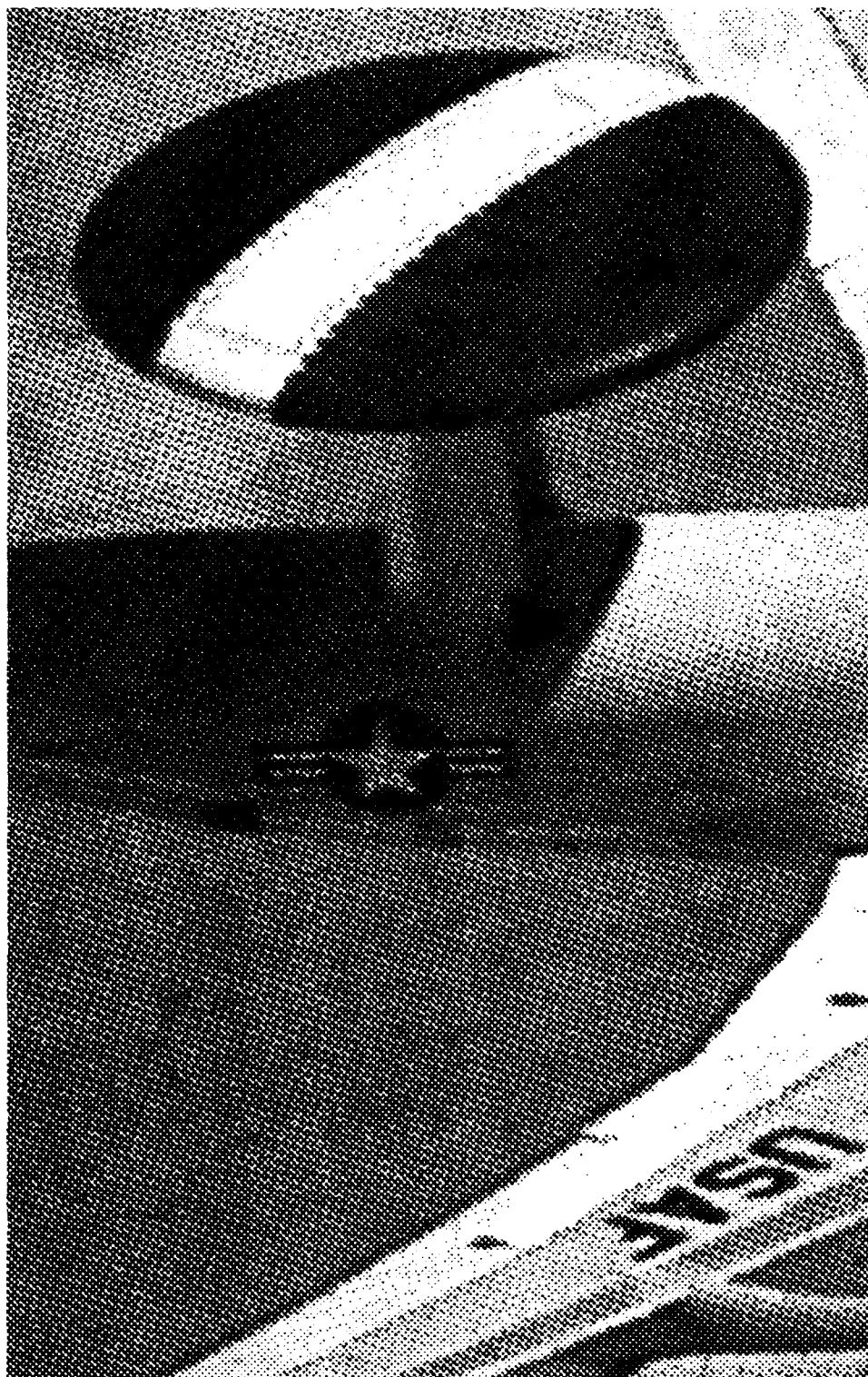
mid-seventies, the whole lunatic AWACS project has reached the following stature: \$9 billion (in 1982 dollars) so far spent for 35 AWACS planes for the U.S. Air Force, including \$1.7 billion as the 42 percent U.S. subsidy for 18 NATO planes. This \$9 billion figure will almost certainly double by the time the whole program is completed.

And now U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East revolves partly around the attempt to sell five AWACS, at a cost of \$5.8 billion, to the Saudis, for whom they will do no good at all, because the "threat" to Saudi Arabia is certainly not Russians, or "Russian surrogates," but internal revolution aimed at evicting the corrupt Wahabbite dynasty—whose interest in the AWACS deal may possibly be enhanced by a hope that, at the recognized rate of 3.5 to 5 percent in kickbacks on arms deals in the Middle East, \$220 million could be washing around the royal clan in Riyadh.

What does Israel really want?

Publicly the Israelis have been raising an enormous clamor about the AWACS sale, and the Israeli lobby in this country has—at the moment—got the votes in the Senate to prevent the sale. But once again the realities are more complex. Begin's military advisors certainly know very well the AWACS's deficiencies. They were informed of the disastrous Pacific tests re-

In one test, fighter planes got within 150 feet of the AWACS—at which point they "could have used a rifle."



vealed by Coates. They do not see AWACS as a military threat. Originally the scenario seemed to be that Israel, after much public outcry, would get its compensation for the Saudi sale, in the form of about \$1 billion in military aid, the bulk of which could be spent at Israel's discretion in Israel (rather than, as previously, awarded to be spent in the United States). Thus the AWACS deal would follow the pattern of a 1978 sale: F-15s to Saudi Arabia, F-16s to Israel, along with vast extra disbursements to the latter.

It now seems possible that the Israeli lobby in the United States has simply gotten out of hand, rather to Israel's discomfort, as aborting the sale would mean increased enmity from the Reagan administration, less compensatory aid and possible annulment of the grandiose plans for closer military cooperation announced after Begin's last visit to Washington.

But the Israeli lobby in the United States may reckon that the political costs of a defeat on AWACS outweigh such considerations. And it may well be that in the next month enough compromises will be nailed into the package to sway the requisite number of senators. Congress, it should be remembered, has never rejected any major arms sale abroad.

One central point to remember is this: In the Reagan era, foreign policy and "defense" policy is being expressed in terms of arms sales. In fact, arms merchants and their accomplices at the Pentagon have long been instrumental in the creation of U.S. foreign policy. AWACS is the prime symbol of this syndrome: a highly complex and bad technical idea leading to gross theft from the taxpayer to the great advantage of Boeing, Westinghouse and the United States Air Force budget, touted by an Air Force general (Jones) and his civilian *doppelgänger* (Brown) and leading the United States into an entirely unnecessary box in the formulation of foreign policy. The shah yesterday, the Saudis today, Sadat tomorrow: the good old U.S. military-industrial complex will nail them all in the end.

Meanwhile Caspar Weinberger and Ronald Reagan have said that only \$2 billion can be clipped from the fiscal 1982 budget. Escaping the ax are innumerable AWACS-like fiascos. The list of boondoggles is gargantuan, and it is getting longer: the concrete expression of the inward and spiritual essence of Reaganomics.

Alexander Cockburn is a columnist for the *Village Voice*.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Belize, new player in a troubled region



By David Helvarg

BELIZE CITY

THE DRIVEWAY UP FROM THE main gate was lined with British sailors in their dress whites. SAS men checked the invitations and press identification of the hundreds of VIPs and reporters streaming onto the manicured lawns overlooking the Caribbean. The Prince and Princess Michael performed the honors as delegates from over 50 countries circulated around the lobster canapes and liquor stations. A tropical storm broke, sending guests scurrying for shelter, but just before midnight the skies cleared. The bagpipes of the Gordon Highlanders began to trill, and the color guard moved forward in their kilts and bear caps. The lights went off as the rain soaked Union Jack was lowered from its pole. "God Save the Queen" was played for a last time. Then the lights came up and the British frigate off-shore began firing its guns as the flag of the new Republic of Belize unfurled from the top of the pole. The band struck up a new anthem. After 110 years, the small Caribbean country of Belize had its independence.

Beyond the gates thousands of Belizeans celebrated independence. The streets of Belize City had been shut down to traffic and opened up to carnival—New Orleans jazz bands, steel drums and reggae.

"Ya Da Fu We Belize"—"Here comes our Belize"—is the Caribe independence slogan for this small Central American country of 145,000 mostly black, English-speaking people. But staying free of the turmoil encompassing much of the rest of the region will not be easy for the Peoples United Party government of Prime Minister George Price. The right-wing military government of neighboring Guatemala claims Belize as part of its own territory. The Guatemalan government closed its borders with Belize the week before the Sept. 21 independence celebrations as a protest over the decolonization agreement drawn up between Great Britain and Belize.

Some 1,600 British troops and a squadron of four Harrier jump jets have been stationed here to provide security for the Belizeans against Guatemalan attack. They will stay on after independence for what has been termed "an appropriate period of time." "We would like to reach some form of agreement with the Guatemalans after independence," explains George Price. "We want to live in peace with our neighbors, but until that is possible an ongoing British presence will be required."

Guatemala has laid claim to Belize since winning its own independence in 1821. At that time British pirates already had taken control of much of Central America's Caribbean coastline. John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake were

among the first to stake out land in what is now Belize.

Later English settlers came with slaves from Jamaica to cut the rosewood and mahogany trees that grew there. The country has been in British hands ever since. In 1862 Belize officially became a crown colony. By then most of the hardwoods had been logged out and the econ-

omy shifted to agricultural exports, particularly sugar. Today sugar still accounts for some 50 percent of export earnings, with the British multinational Tate & Lyle controlling most of the production.

The modern process of decolonization began in 1950 when George Price helped found the pro-independence Peoples United Party (PUP). He took party leadership in 1956. When Britain granted Belize internal self-government in 1964 he was elected premier. He has since been re-elected three times, making him the region's ranking leader in terms of length of service.

Widely popular at home, the 62-year-old Price has had a checkered career. Raised in Belize he originally trained for the Catholic priesthood. Later he worked as a clerk for a local millionaire before becoming a trade-union and independence activist. In 1975, dissatisfied with the pace of British-Guatemalan negotiations, he mobilized the PUP to begin an international campaign to win support for Belizean independence. This culminated in November, 1980, when the United Nations voted 139 to 0 (with seven abstentions) for Belizean independence by the end of 1981.

The conservative United Democratic Party (UDP) had opposed "premature"

independence, arguing that Belize should not break the colonial tie until the Guatemalan issue is resolved. But PUP activists argued that so long as the Guatemalan military was involved in an internal guerrilla war against its own people it would continue to use its claim on Belize as a distraction at home and an international red herring. Early this spring anti-independence rioting took place in several Belize towns. Two people were killed before the governor general declared a state of emergency.

But independence week saw no protest activity. Delegations came to the celebration from throughout the world, including the U.S., the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Mexico, Cuba and Nicaragua. The U.S. delegation was headed up by conservative Democrat Rep. Daniel Mica of Dade County, Florida, and included undersecretary of State Thomas Enders, Reagan's Central America trouble shooter. Maurice Bishop, the prime minister of the revolutionary government on the island of Grenada, was in attendance, as was Sergio Ramirez, a member of Nicaragua's ruling Sandinista junta.

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The streets of Belize City were closed to traffic and opened up to carnival for independence day.



THE MIDEAST

Cynicism greets West Bank reforms

By David Mandel

ISRAELI-OCCUPIED WEST BANK

ASEGYPT-ISRAELI-U.S. NEGOTIATIONS for Palestinian autonomy reopened in Cairo Sept. 23—after a 15-month lapse—the hosts expressed satisfaction at several recent policy changes announced by Israel concerning administration of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Egyptians are anxious to find some Palestinians inside the territories who will agree to join the talks, or at least cooperate with any agreements reached.

But Ramallah mayor Karim Khalaf, discussing the latest Israeli pronouncements in his office as the negotiators met

in the shadow of the pyramids, sounded downright cynical, which was the word he used to describe the new Israeli gambits. "If [Israeli Defense Minister Ariel] Sharon's 'easing of everyday restrictions' and 'ending harassment' are any indication, then we're in for big trouble with the 'civilianizing' of the military government," he predicted.

Khalaf reviewed the restrictions placed on him and other West Bank mayors and public figures since last year, when the authorities clamped down on the National Guidance Committee, a coordinating body formed by pro-PLO Palestinians for civil resistance to the occupation. They are not allowed to leave their home cities without written permission, rendering any such coordinating body useless. "We can talk by phone," the mayor ad-

mitted, "but we are sure that extra ears are listening."

Recently, Khalaf went on, free speech on the West Bank has suffered attacks beyond the previous restrictions on access to the media and free assembly. His own experience is illuminating: This summer, the mayors were summoned and given new instructions forbidding them from expressing support in any form for the PLO. Soon afterwards, Khalaf was arrested in connection with an interview in an East Jerusalem newspaper in which he said that the PLO represents the Palestinian people. Such words are as common on the West Bank as support for the existence of a Jewish state is across the "green line" in Israel, and the interview, Khalaf pointed out, took place before he had received the new instructions. Nevertheless, he was interrogated for several days and then released on bail of almost \$1,000.

The case is still menacingly being kept open, and the effects were clear in Khalaf's approach to our interview. He balked at having his words recorded, and would not voice the name "PLO." Instead, he circumvented it with the phrase "our national leadership, which has been recognized by the UN."

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ENGLAND

Close vote highlights Labour Party rift

By Mervyn Jones

LONDON

DENIS HEALEY HAS WON THE deputy leadership of the Labour Party by the slimmest of margins. The esoteric formula whereby the votes are calculated gave him 50.426 percent, against Tony Benn's 49.574 percent.

Benn came so near to victory because he had a massive majority—more than four-fifths of votes cast—among the constituency parties, or local party units. In the battle for the hearts and minds of the roughly 100,000 people who take a regular part in Labour Party politics, he emerges the clear winner. But he failed to gain the support of the millions whose party membership rests on trade-union affiliation, who are not directly involved in party debates, and who, so Benn's supporters insist, are heavily influenced by the media.

Also crucial to the outcome was the abstention of 19 members of parliament who belong to the traditional left of the Labour Party but see Benn as a divisive liability. By abstaining on the first ballot, they reduced the size of the MPs section of the electoral college and thus increased Healey's percentage. Intense bitterness between these MPs and the Bennites is only too predictable.

Meanwhile, the ramshackle nature of the representative processes, notably in the unions, is obvious to all. The "consultation" in the Transport and General Workers Union, the biggest union, showed a majority for Healey. But many branches had never polled their members, and in the end the delegation pleased itself and voted for Benn. What passes for democracy in the British labor movement is due for a big overhaul.

The vote for the post of deputy leader on Sunday evening, Sept. 27, was the first order of business for the Labour Party's 1981 conference, and for most of the delegates and certainly for the media and public opinion, the rest of the week was an anti-climax.

A special conference last January decided that the leader and deputy leader, chosen solely by Labour MPs throughout the party's history, would in future be elected at the annual conference. Since there was no opposition to Michael Foot as leader, only the deputy leader slot was at stake. In the past, this has sometimes been a relatively unimportant position held by a loyal wheelhorse. But two things were special about Tony Benn, 1981's left-wing challenger. All who know him expected that, if elected, he would soon start laying down party policy and behaving as though he were leader. And, being 12 years younger than the 68-year-old Foot, he would be well placed to take over on the latter's retirement.

The election was decided on a complicated formula that gives 40 percent weightage to the trade unions, 30 percent to constituency parties (local membership units) and 30 percent to MPs. This formula is itself controversial. Foot and others favor a different weightage—50 percent to MPs, 25 each to unions and constituencies—and planned to press for a change during the week of the conference.

Foot was himself elected by MPs only in November 1980, before the new system had been adopted. He narrowly defeated right-winger Healey. The MPs then agreed without a contest that Healey should be deputy, to achieve a balanced ticket and hold the party together. Benn didn't run either for leader or for deputy, on the grounds that the real decision would be on the conference franchise.

The case against Healey's continuance as deputy leader was simple. On critical issues—especially, unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from the European Economic Community—he dis-

agrees with the policies adopted at the 1980 conference and sure to be endorsed this year. It is intolerable, Benn has argued, for the party's number two to be a person opposed to what the party must advocate in an election campaign and implement if it gains power.

Healey replied that Labour hasn't yet drawn up its election manifesto, which under existing rules is worked out through discussion between the national executive (the trustee of conference) and the MPs. Clearly, he hopes for some leeway on these vital issues—especially as a Labour Britain would need the friendship of Socialist France, whose leaders are solid for the retention of nuclear weapons and dismayed by the prospect of a British withdrawal from Europe. But the old way of drawing up the manifesto is itself under challenge by the Benn forces, who think that conference decisions should be supreme.

he pointed out that elections with a single nominee are the hallmark of the Moscow system. Foot replied: "If you have too many elections in too many circumstances you undermine the validity of the most essential elections." More sharply, he asked why Benn didn't challenge him for the position of leader.

When Benn announced his candidacy in April, Foot—and also several influential figures in the "old left"—pleaded with him not to press on. They foresaw an intensified struggle within the party, at a time when all the gunfire should be concentrated on Thatcher. As Benn industriously plodded around from one constituency or union conference to another, arguing his case and lobbying delegates, this is just what happened. Naturally, an enthusiastic part has been played by the media, never slow to dramatize a clash of personalities.

Peter Shore, a figure of the moderate

Benn, given only an outside chance when he threw his hat into the ring, made obvious headway all summer. He had a runaway majority in the constituencies, and though he was unpopular with MPs, the open voting ensured that some of them, at least, would suppress their personal preference for Healey for fear of losing their constituencies.

Everything, therefore, depended on the unions. A few had carried out a postal ballot of their members, and the result had most often favored Healey, bolstering his claim to be the candidate of the silent majority. In other cases, the decision has been made by the union's own executive committee, a procedure that can create some embarrassment because the committee doesn't have to be composed entirely of Labour Party members. In the construction workers' union, the balance was swung by three Communists—a fact on which Healey



An esoteric voting formula allowed Denis Healey to win the deputy leader post by a minute margin, even though Tony Benn had won the hearts and minds of the 100,000 members who participate in party politics.

The most saddening aspect of the current warfare within the party is the enmity between left and left, as well as left and right. In the battles of the '50s, clear differences on policy divided left-wing leader Aneurin Bevan from the right's Hugh Gaitskill and formed the substance of argument. But today, on policy issues, there is no overt disagreement between Foot and Benn. Yet Foot, while refraining from a flat endorsement of Healey, made it clear that Benn's election to the deputy leadership would be highly unwelcome to him.

Tony come lately?

To a marked degree (and of course with individual exceptions), the antagonism follows a generation gap. Foot supporters are mostly veterans of the Bevan era, and point out acidly that Benn has become a left-winger only in recent years; in particular, he stood aloof from the "first wave" (1958 to '63) of the nuclear disarmament campaign, in which Foot was prominent, and took a stand only when the "second wave" got rolling after 1979. But what matters to younger radicals is that Benn now stands uncompromisingly for all the causes in which they believe.

Urging strongly that party democracy must be made a reality, Benn has said that if there is provision for a contested election it ought to take place. Rebutting charges of sympathy for Communism,

left—no nuclear disarmament but strong on quitting Europe and on radical economic policies—who is slated to be Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer, said it all in a speech on Sept. 12: "If we had been infiltrated by paid agents of the Tory and Liberal parties, we could not have managed our affairs...in a way so helpful to our enemies and so mischievous to ourselves."

Viewers of a peak-hour BBC program on Sept. 14 saw the Labour candidates—Benn, Healey and "conciliator" John Silkin, who was not expected to get into the run-off—denouncing one another with a heat more usual when two different parties face off before the cameras.

The bitterness has various roots, but one is certainly Benn's insistence that members of Parliament should follow the line laid down by the party conference. Foot, attacking "the doctrine of infallible authority of conference decisions," has warned: "Any who sought to apply it with inflexible rigor would break the party to smithereens." Moreover, the conference assemblies only once a year, and the "infallible authority" in between times would be the 26 members of the executive committee, or (given predictable appointments) the headquarters machine. Janey Buchanan, another "old" leftist of the Bevan tradition, has declared that the danger is of intolerance "leading ultimately to the Culeg"—a charge regarded by outraged Bennites as an injurious smear.

naturally capitalized.

But the biggest unions—the engineers, the miners and, above all, the catch-all Transport and General Workers' Union, which by itself carries 8 percent of the total poll under the weightage formula—have engaged in a process called "consultation of the membership." Nobody knows quite what this means, except that branch secretaries get letters asking them to report on the views of their members, which may be expressed at poorly attended meetings or in informal discussions.

In the light of all these machinations, it was not hard for one to envisage the loser emulating Orson Welles' Citizen Kane when he ran for governor. (If you don't remember the movie, the Kane papers set two alternative headlines: "Kane Wins" and "Fraud at Polls.") The question now being asked by anxious Labour politicians is whether they must endure the same damaging conflict in 1982, a year closer to the general election expected for 1983.

Will Benn run again next year? Having come so close, he will be strongly tempted to have another try. But some friends, as well as critics, will plead with him to allow the party a chance of internal peace.

Mervyn Jones, former *In These Times* London correspondent who now writes for the *New Statesman*, has been filing a series of reports on British politics.



TAKE THIS MOP AND SHOVE IT

Reagan's solution to welfare is to put recipients to work. The shortage of jobs and lack of future in them hasn't dampened enthusiasm in many state governments.

BY RONNI SCHEIER

IT WAS A BLISTERING SUMMER AFTERNOON. As the saying goes, you could have fried an egg on the pavement. Lorenzo Myers sounded about as though he would find that about as useful a task as some of those he'd been assigned that week. "What I did yesterday," he complained, "was empty garbage cans, mow the lawn and cut hedges. Cutting lawns ain't gonna get you nowhere."

Myers, 19, has been on welfare since May, when he lost his job at a Burger King restaurant. In return for his \$120 monthly grant he must spend about 36 hours working wherever his caseworker sends him. That week he pulled yard duty for the Christian Action Ministry, a Chicago social service agency. Working alongside him was James Johnson, 42, a sheet metal worker who is out of a job, he says, for the first time in his adult life. Johnson is a tall, powerfully built man. Sweat glistens on his forehead.

"All my life I worked and paid income taxes. The minute I apply for welfare they make me come out here and do this work," he says bitterly. "It's humiliating. I don't mind working, it's just the idea of this. I look on it as a form of punishment for those of us, maybe we're not lucky enough, maybe we're not smart enough, maybe we're not crooked enough."

There are others who view workfare more favorably, says Donald Richardson, the Illinois Department of Public Aid official in charge of making the welfare work assignments. Some have been out of work for a while and welcome the chance to show they can handle a job. A few even have shown up to work extra hours. "They say, 'I really feel like I'm somebody out there,'" Richardson beams.

Workfare has come of age in the '80s. Preceding decades featured federal welfare reform programs that emphasized job training and placement for the long-term unemployed. But the considerable cost of these programs and their dubious results won them slots high on the hit lists of fiscally focused legislators. Workfare, previously relegated to the backburner of welfare reform strategies, now is being served up as a main course.

Workfare requires that welfare recipients, in essence, "work off" their grants.

The jobs, located primarily in social service agencies and government offices, are generally menial—often janitorial for men and clerical for women. Recipients work at an hourly rate equal to the \$3.35 minimum wage and get no benefits and no pay beyond their monthly welfare checks, which average \$176 in Chicago.

Proponents hail workfare as a means to pare welfare rolls and restore the American work ethic. They say welfare clients gain valuable experience and, at the same time, repay their debt to society by performing socially useful tasks. Critics argue that workfare is exploitative and consigns recipients to a form of indentured servitude. They contend workfare programs have neither saved public money nor helped recipients find jobs. Where workfare has been tried, they say, welfare rolls have nonetheless continued to swell.

Studies on workfare uphold many of the critics' claims. But the strength of the current debate appears to rest less on fact than on ideology and the sheer force of emotion.

"I call it slavery," says Clarence Probst, chief organizer for the Illinois Welfare Rights Coalition. "You get a little bread crumb here and you work for it or you starve to death."

"Nobody has a right to live off everybody else for their whole lives," says Illinois State Senator Donald L. Totten, who managed Ronald Reagan's presidential campaigns in 1976 and 1980.

The Illinois legislature voted in 1979 to mandate workfare for recipients of general assistance (GA), a welfare program for able-bodied adults. The Illinois Department of Public Aid, which finances and administers GA in Chicago, has operated a pilot workfare project since late January on the city's North Side. The program was scheduled to become citywide in October.

But workfare here has done little to slow welfare growth. The North Side GA caseload increased 10.5 percent from January through July, about the same rate of growth found in the city's GA population as a whole.

The public aid department is now in the midst of a statistical evaluation to determine if workfare is saving the state money. Based on preliminary figures, the department is predicting annual savings of about \$4 million as recipients are dropped from welfare rolls for failure to complete work assignments and other reasons. But the reliability of the department's estimates is far from assured. And while one official noted that workfare dropouts have increased with each month of the program, he concedes that many of those canceled may soon turn up back on welfare rolls.



UT WHATEVER

the result of the pilot project, workfare will be implemented. "The pilot program was conducted not to find out whether workfare is effective," Loughnane explains, but "to determine the best way to do it." She adds that the program will be beneficial whether it saves the state money or not because of the work experience it provides recipients and the additional income they receive from financially-strained families.

Before they are placed at a work site, Chicago workfare recipients undergo a job search period during which they must show evidence that they are looking for work. In some instances, caseworkers arrange interviews with employers who have agreed to consider hiring welfare recipients. After 60 days those who still have no jobs are given workfare assignments and must continue to seek regular employment on their days off. About 100 recipients each month are enrolled in a "job club," where they are given special training in how to look for employment.

A department report says the job search program, which has been a component of general assistance for several years, "was able to account for more than 12,000 clients moving into self-support status" citywide in 1979 and 1980. But a review by Jobs Watch, a Washington watchdog group, of an experimental job search program begun under former President Jimmy Carter, the Employment Opportunities Pilot Project, found that such efforts too often fail to remove persons permanently from welfare. "While job search led to employment for a fairly large proportion of recipients, the jobs were mostly low-paying ones in the secondary labor market, with considerable potential for fast termination and a return to welfare," Jobs Watch concluded.

A 1978 survey of workfare programs in 19 states by the National Association of Counties also concluded that job placement efforts were "wholly inadequate."

Ironically, as the pressure mounts to shift welfare recipients quickly into jobs, economic turbulence is accelerating the flow of people out of the job market and onto the public dole. In Chicago, which has experienced a dramatic decline in low-skilled industrial jobs, the general assistance population has climbed 42 percent since 1978. The unemployment rate among minority city residents averaged 15.4 percent in 1980; among minority teenagers it averaged a stunning 53.3 percent. The actual unemployment rate was even higher, because these figures do not take into account persons who have given up looking for work.

Factory jobs in the city are rapidly being supplanted by desk jobs. The problem is not a lack of work, says Dennis McAvoy, research director for the Chicago Economic Development Commission, but a shortage of jobs that welfare recipients are qualified to do.

"A lot of industrial jobs can accommodate people as willing workers who don't have a lot of education," he explains. "It seems like the jobs that are emerging...require more communication skills and education."

Opponents of workfare argue that it does little to improve the employability of welfare recipients. "There's no built-in upward mobility," objects Theresa Funicello, president of the Downtown Welfare Advocate Center in New York City. "All you're doing is shifting people around."

"Granted, our program doesn't provide an extensive amount of vocational training," says Phil Hatmaker, chief of the Illinois public aid department's Bureau of Social Services. "It's designed to get people moving on their own. Somebody who wants to move up the economic ladder probably ought to find a minimum wage job and go to school, but do it on their own nickels and not the state's. The simple fact is the state is in financial straits."

Besides, he adds, "it's rare that you get anything for nothing these days."

Workfare in this country goes back at least 40 years. But it wasn't until Ronald Reagan's tenure as governor of California that the concept achieved national attention. Workfare was one facet of Reagan's broad welfare reform program. Federal regulations at the time prohibited the enforcement of work requirements on recipients of welfare programs funded by the federal government. Reagan obtained a waiver to conduct a workfare experiment with unemployed fathers in households receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which is funded jointly by the federal government and the states.

The experiment, begun in 1972, was

ended three years later by Gov. Jerry Brown. An evaluation completed in 1976 by the state's Employment Development Department declared the program a complete failure. Resistance had been pronounced among caseworkers and recipients alike. As a result, only 9,600 of nearly two million welfare clients ever were given work assignments, the report says. It finds no evidence that the program had any success in discouraging people from applying for welfare or in motivating those on welfare to go off and find jobs. Moreover, the report says, workfare "did not prove to be administratively feasible and practical."



RESIDENT REAGAN

disputed those findings, and considered the experiment successful enough to place it high on his agenda of national welfare reforms. He urged Congress to order the states to implement workfare for persons in welfare mandatory, but in the August budget reconciliation package it included a provision that for the first time permits states to require work in return for food stamps and AFDC. An estimated 800,000 of the 10.8 million AFDC recipients will be affected should all the states opt in favor of workfare. At least 10 states so far have picked up on the new option, the *New York Times* reported last week.

One of the longest standing experiments with workfare is in Utah, which implemented its Work Experience and Training program (WEAT) in 1974. Approximately 8,000 AFDC recipients have taken part in WEAT, most of them women, says Usher West, the program's coordinator. They work 96 hours a month in community service jobs, regardless of the size of their welfare grants.

Workfare is most beneficial to welfare mothers who have never held a salaried job or who have been out of the labor force for some time, West says. "They prove to themselves they're capable of working," he explains.

Twenty-three percent of participants have found jobs and another 2 percent have been hired by their workfare employers, says West. A 1977 report by the Denver regional office of the Department of Health and Human Services set the cost of WEAT at just under \$383,000 per year. It estimated annual savings in grant expenditures of \$1.5 million. No controlled study has been performed, however, to determine how many of those who were dropped from the rolls would have left or found jobs even without WEAT.

Workfare had no effect on the probability of finding a job in Massachusetts, according to a study of a 15-month workfare experiment there. In that experiment, begun in 1978, 63 percent of those given workfare assignments found jobs compared to 57 percent of recipients in a control group, who had no work requirement. The difference was not statistically significant, says the report, by the Center for Employment and Income Studies at Brandeis University.

The experiment was conducted on male AFDC recipients not enrolled in any job training or placement programs. "The majority of men considered appropriate for work experience were employ-

able and capable of finding work through normal channels," the report concludes. "They are much slower than average in finding jobs, but their lengthy bouts of unemployment are not a barrier to finding jobs; they can do so without the special [workfare program]."

The study estimates the program's cost at \$459,000 or \$445 per client, "with no significant benefits from work experience either in terms of increased work or reduced welfare costs."

Robert Lerman, an economist at Brandeis, was one of six authors of the report. "It seems like you're getting something for nothing because you're already paying these people," he says, "but it doesn't cost nothing to run." In the end, "you generate a lot of heat and a lot of controversy and very little happens."

Paul Roberts does some quick mental arithmetic and then traces the damage caused by federal cuts in Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) programs. His agency, Christian Action Ministry, will lose 16 CETA-funded positions. Roberts, job development director, looks to workfare to help fill some of the holes. "I'm very enthusiastic about it," he says.

The agency has agreed to take on 86 welfare recipients. Roberts concedes that some of these people will perform, at minimum wage, jobs for which CETA workers were paid considerably more. In all, Chicago is slated to lose 6,000 CETA slots, or \$62 million in federally-subsidized employment. Roberts believes workfare is being offered as a salve to the budgets of social service agencies, hit especially hard by the cuts in CETA and other social programs.

Christian Action Ministry is one of 102 Chicago community groups, charitable agencies and other non-profit organizations that have agreed to take on workfare participants. The public aid department also has begun to place welfare clients in state offices, after reaching an agreement with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the union that represents state workers. The arrangement stipulates that welfare recipients will not displace regular employees.

Nevertheless, there is considerable fear, here and elsewhere, that an influx of welfare workers could, in the long run, squeeze out higher paid employees. "There's a general sense that if you've got labor around that's cheap and labor around that's dear, the cheap dries out the dear," says Paul Booth, associate director of AFSCME Council 31.

There is added concern that if welfare recipients are made available to private businesses—they are not, so far, in most workfare programs—the resulting glut of low-paid, non-unionized workers could bring down wages and severely weaken the bargaining power of unions. In fact, Funicello, of New York's Downtown Welfare Advocate Center, views workfare as a deliberate effort by the government to orchestrate the sacrifice of workers' wages and benefits to the deity, inflation. Confides Booth, "We are frantic about it."

Booth and others charge that policy makers, in their eagerness to constrain welfare costs, have brushed aside the serious ramifications of workfare. But at the heart of the debate, some believe, is a more fundamental moral question: Is welfare a privilege bestowed on the needy, to which conditions are reasonably attached, or is it a right?

Welfare advocates say public assistance is a right, and that recipients should not be forced to give up the freedom to choose the conditions under which they work. "People would be glad to work for a salary," says Dovie Thurmon, vice president of the Illinois Welfare Rights Coalition. "But I'm not gonna just go and wash someone's toilet out 'cause they tell me."

State Sen. Totten sees it differently. "If they are otherwise able-bodied, to be living off someone else's earnings doesn't entitle them to be choosy about employment." Welfare, he says emphatically, "is not a right."

Ronni Scheier covers health and welfare issues for the *Chicago Reporter*, where a longer version of this story first appeared.

EDITORIAL



Participants in the AFL-CIO Solidarity Day march in Washington, September 19.

Social Security: A fake crisis

In his latest television appearance, on Sept. 24, President Reagan insulted the intelligence and dignity of millions of working and unemployed Americans by insisting once again that in his budget "benefits for the needy will be protected." Just a week before the budget cuts adopted by Congress last spring go into effect, Reagan has proposed an additional \$13 billion in cuts for fiscal 1982 that would further reduce benefits for Medicare, Medicaid, welfare, food stamps, subsidized housing, pensions, student loans and other entitlement programs. If adopted, these reductions will hit lower-paid working people hardest.

The one program to escape the president's ax on Sept. 24 was social security. Reagan had intended to continue whittling down social security benefits, too, but the system's 36 million current beneficiaries—and potential beneficiaries comprising almost the entire American citizenry—got their message to Congress, and Reagan backed off. Still, the fight to preserve social security benefits is not over. To underline that point, Secretary of Health and Human Services Richard Schweiker told Congress on Sept. 23 that Americans had better look more to private pension funds and scale down their expectations about social security.

In fact, the American social security system has been one of the least generous in the world, though until Reagan it had followed the universal trend of steadily extended coverage and more adequate benefits. Initiated in the 1880s in Germany, by Otto von Bismarck, and since adopted by every industrialized country in the world (and by more than 100 countries in all), social security was enacted relatively late by the United States. It was not until the middle of the Great Depression, in 1935, that American working people gained a measure of security for their retirement years. And even then, President Franklin D. Roosevelt acted largely to stave off more comprehensive reforms like the Townsend Plan and the Lundeen Unemployment Insurance Bill—already reported out favorably by the House Committee on Labor—which would have provided compensation equivalent to full wages, to be paid out of general revenues to anyone unemployed for as long as he or

she remained out of work.

Now, in the richest and most powerful nation on earth, Health and Human Services Secretary Schweiker says the crisis is "inescapable." "If we do nothing," he says, "the system will go broke."

But just what is the crisis?

The crisis is political.

According to Reagan there are two crises. In the short run, the Old Age and Survivors Insurance fund (OASI) may run out of money by the end of 1982. In the longer run, as the American population ages and the baby boom generation begins to arrive at retirement age, the decline in the ratio of active workers to the retired will put an excessive burden on those still working (and paying in).

But as Teresa Ghilarducci of the University of California's Institute of Industrial Relations says, the Reagan administration's alarm about the impending social security crisis is like diagnosing a scratched finger as gangrene and then amputating the arm. According to Ghilarducci, "The cuts proposed by the Reagan administration will save twice as much as is needed to cover the projected deficits in the social security trust funds." Reagan's own Task Force on Social Security, appointed during the 1980 transition, observed that though the OASI fund will run out of money in 1982, the other component funds of the social security system, the Disability Insurance fund and the Hospital Insurance fund will have surpluses large enough to compensate if the funds are pooled. On Sept. 24 Reagan conceded that the short-term problem was not so serious by approving a proposal to get through the short-term crunch by means of interfund borrowing.

As for the long-term problems, while it is true that in the years 2005 to 2030 the number of people 65 years of age and older will increase greatly, it is not clear whether there will actually be an increase in the ratio of those drawing benefits to those paying in. Birth rates and immigration cannot accurately be predicted. Similarly, the official estimates that an increasingly large proportion of wages will be paid in untaxed fringe benefits (not subject to payroll taxes) may not hold. If this does not happen, payroll taxes may generate

more social security revenue than is now projected.

But in a very real sense all this is beside the point. Both of the administration's "crises" hinge on the notion that the social security system has become "actuarially unsound"—that is, that its projected excess of expenditures over revenues would be unacceptable for a private pension system. But the analogy is fallacious. The soundness of social security is a political question that requires a political decision to provide enough tax revenues to meet a politically determined amount of benefits. As long as the American people want the social security system to be viable, and as long as they are able to elect a Congress committed to that goal, the system will survive. The crisis, then, is not in the social security system, but in who holds office.

By overstating the problems of the social security system and proposing cutbacks in benefits that are most needed by minorities and low-wage workers, Reagan clearly hopes to pull off a political sleight of hand similar to the accounting deception performed by Lyndon Johnson when he combined the social security budget with the general budget during the Vietnam war in order to disguise the high level of military spending.

Private plans are not the answer.

Conservatives are quick to point out the problems with social security, but they are not so revealing about the inadequacies of the private pension plans that they prefer. From the point of view of the banks and large corporations, private plans are indeed attractive, given the massive amounts of money that come under the trustees' control. But not so for the would-be pensioners. First, in 1979 only 45.7 percent of the people who work in the private sector were covered by private pension plans. Most people employed by smaller firms are not covered by pension plans because their employers cannot afford to set them up and are often themselves too tenuous.

Second, many workers who contribute to private pension plans never receive benefits. As Steve Bruce of the Pension Rights Center points out, in 1979, when 50 percent of all non-farm workers contributed to pension plans

only 27 percent were "vested"—eligible to receive benefits when they retired. Under the Employment Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, most employees become vested after 10 years on the job. Those who do not last 10 years with a firm are out in the cold.

And workers who do receive private pensions are not well off. According to the report of the President's Commission on Pension Policy, in 1978 private pensions averaged \$3,689 annually for a couple and \$2,919 for single workers. (At the same time retirees under the Federal Civil Service Pension plan received an annual average of \$8,951 per couple and \$6,628 per single worker.)

Finally, there is the question of the survivability of private pensions funded by corporations in a world where even giants like Chrysler can be threatened with bankruptcy. Can young workers beginning careers be certain that their company will exist 40 years later? The federal government seems to think there is need for more security and in 1974 created the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC) to insure private pension benefits. But according to Steve Bruce, "The PBGC is an untested program that does not insure a worker's entire pension benefits. There is a real question whether it will be able to guarantee the pensions of all the corporations that go under."

More, not less.

Instead of weakening the social security system and forcing greater reliance on private pensions, the best way to enhance the income security of most Americans is by strengthening social security. One way to increase social security revenues without increasing the tax burden on low-income earners would be to lift the ceiling on the taxable earnings base. Currently, earnings above \$29,500 are not subject to the flat-rate social security payroll tax. A study published by the Brookings Institution in 1977 found that such a change would be sufficient to eliminate both the short-term and long-term deficit projections.

Many countries strengthen their social security systems through contributions from general government revenue. Every industrial nation but the United States and France adds to its social security funds in this manner. In Sweden, the government's share is 55 percent. In Japan, Great Britain and West Germany the government contributes 20 percent, 18 percent and 16 percent respectively. In the U.S., every Social Security Advisory Council but one since 1937 has recommended general funding to some degree. Currently all organizations of the elderly—the National Council of Senior Citizens, the American Association of Retired People, the Gray Panthers and so on—as well as the AFL-CIO support partial funding from general revenues.

Several countries also strengthen their social security funds by taxing employers at a higher rate than employees. In Italy, for instance, employees pay a payroll tax of 7.15 percent while employers pay a rate of 16.6 percent. In Sweden, the employer pays 20.3 percent while employees pay nothing.

Whatever the scheme for strengthening the social security system, the key will be to gain control over increases in productivity that the development of new technology will bring. The social security system should be made to put this wealth to work for the American public by providing for increased social welfare benefits and by accumulating a surplus in the social security funds that could be invested in industries such as housing in order to fulfill people's needs unmet by the market. ■

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

THREE MORE YEARS

I CELEBRATE A CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING that will almost outlive the Reagan years, i.e. subscribing to *In These Times* beyond Jan. 20, 1985. I have reached the conclusion that I really can't do without either *ITT* or *The Nation*, particularly since I note that the national wire services and the networks are beginning to sound like '80s documentaries. Of course, there is always the possibility that someone will impeach our fearless scriptwriter, but I imagine that he has a high megatonnage of legal staff, far beyond the force needed to convince Jesse Helms or Jeremiah Denton of any innocence.

As the owner of 50 shares of Canadian mining stock, I discover that I have been placed on the GOP mailing list, which entitles me to (a) give my opinion on rather fantastically worded priorities and to (b) contribute vast sums of money to said crew of political troglodytes.

Your paper is always like a breath of fresh air and is the only periodical that my colleagues at the college where I teach Spanish never seem to return.

—Richard H. Aldridge

Local 1647, United Faculties of Florida, Miami

BLACK FILMMAKERS

I AM PLEASED THAT *IN THESE TIMES* was able to give so much space and in-depth coverage to the Black Independent Film Festival and Black Independent Cinema (*ITT*, Aug. 26). For too long the work of black independent film and video producers has gone unnoticed in the major media and left press.

There are some areas in the article, however, that need further explication and there are several errors. I take strong exception to a quote from St. Clair Bourne labeling the filmmakers as "novices." Several of them are from St. Clair's generation or older (Woody King Jr., Joanne Grant, Larry Clark) and if the appellation of "novice" doesn't apply to age, then it must apply to the amount or quality of work produced. If this is St. Clair's intent, he is biased and uninformed, since some of the filmmakers have produced more independent work than Bourne, and a majority of them have won major national and international awards for their work.

I also find it strange that he has labeled most of the films as "cultural nationalist." As an ex-member of the Black Panther Party and Young Lords Party Central Committee and various other movement struggles over the last 15 years, the term "cultural nationalist" was used in the past to "put down" those persons who were thought to have no politics, or no real consciousness of struggle and organizing. I have severe problems applying it to the content of the films that were presented in Chicago, and also doubt that Bourne is qualified to make that type of political analysis. "Pass Fail" by Roy Campanella Jr., is the story of a young filmmaker's struggle to fight the great system, the lack of funding, the politics of being a black independent, and speaks to many of the problems faced by all blacks fighting to survive and win a family at the same time. "The Story of Mothers" is the story of the Harlem Six, and Woody King Jr.'s film "Reconstruction" deals with a case that was a political

cause celebre in New York. "Black at Yale" by Warrington Hudlin is about black students and their relationship, or lack of one, to the black community surrounding major universities. Stokely Carmichael's comments in the film on the role that black students must play in the struggle are as apropos today as they were when the film was made. Charles Burnett's "Killer of Sheep" is a major drama about the black working class and the frustration and demeaning of all workers in this society, though focusing on one particular black family, and "Fundi" of course is Joanne Grant's portrayal of a major figure in the civil rights movement. And surely, the subject of racism in the Boston school system as portrayed by Jackie Shearer's "A Minor Altercation," is not "cultural nationalism."

I question the choice of Bourne as your "authority" since his works were not included in the festival, nor did he attend. The results of using one filmmaker to critique another filmmaker's works are usually disastrous. Far better to have approached Clayton Riley, Oliver Franklin, Thomas Cripps, Donald Bogle or other black film critics, scholars, or historians to provide an overview on the movement of black independent cinema.

I would also like to correct some of your assumptions about the films and filmmakers. The filmmakers are not "graduate students" as they were de-

scribed. Ayoka Chenzira is a working filmmaker and mother, Joanne Grant is a writer, Michelle Parkerson is a television engineer, Woody King Jr. is a working filmmaker and theater producer, Charles Lane, Roy Campanella Jr., Larry Clark, Warrington Hudlin and Jackie Shearer are working filmmakers.

Your assumptions about "Street Corner Stories" as a film about the black unemployed missed the point since the film is specifically about working men who hang out at a particular breakfast joint in New Haven at 5 and 6 a.m. before going to work. And it was not a student film, for it was made four years after Washington Hudlin graduated from college. Burnett's "Killer of Sheep" did not confuse the audience about whether or not the film had ended—the fact that the projectionist clipped off the end did.

As executive director of the Black Filmmaker Foundation, I take particular exception to the labelling of our efforts as "mastering the American hype," to get back to St. Clair Bourne's irritating commentary. I find this remark particularly distasteful since Bourne's work is included in the catalog and distribution service he seems to deride. The Black Filmmaker Cooperative Distribution Service is the only service of its kind available expressly for black filmmakers.

Since he was the only filmmaker to be given the label "veteran" in your article, I would in closing like to make note of some of the true veterans and founders of the current "wave" of black independent cinema, if we are to accept the premise of the "fifth wave" at all. Melvin Van Peebles, William Greaves and before them, Oscar Micheaux must be mentioned if one wants to construct a genealogy of black independent cinema. St. Clair Bourne, Ethiopian filmmaker Haile Gerima and all the filmmakers represented in the Chicago festival owe them a debt of gratitude for breaking ground, but I feel strongly that none of the current crop are "reinventing the wheel" but are

making personal, political, historical and cultural statements about the world as they see it through a camera lens, and should be supported in continuing to present us with their varying visions, exclusive of the past.

—Denise Oliver
Executive Director,
The Black Filmmaker Foundation
New York

Pat Aufderheide replies: I am grateful to the Black Filmmakers Foundation and to the concerned filmmakers for their corrections and clarifications of my report on the Black Independent Film Festival.

I tried to indicate in my article that the festival reflected diversity in black American culture. This was one of its excitements. The future direction of black independent film was of particular interest to me, and for that reason techniques such as sessions with audiences after films and the remarks of filmmaker St. Clair Bourne interested me. I am sorry that his remarks were read by the Foundation members as critical, especially as I did not intend to pit one filmmaker against another and as Bourne praised the utility of the catalog and other marketing services of the Foundation.

I am sorry I overstated the inexperience of filmmakers. My intent was to stress the new beginning possible to people with a body of work and a distributing arm. The filmmakers themselves stressed the importance of the festival in marking a new beginning. Roy Campanella stressed the uniqueness of this trend in films. I discussed the film school opportunity to create a body of work not to imply that filmmakers were incompetent but that they could get their first real chance at wide-ranging public recognition.

For this reason I found the marketing innovations of the Foundation important. For too long filmmakers have had to fight to find funds to make a film and then spend years distributing it. The infrastructure that the Foundation provides for filmmakers is crucial.

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Each year on our anniversary we publish an issue of the newspaper that includes greetings from various trade unions, political organizations, left publications and individuals. It's an opportunity for our friends and supporters across the country to help us celebrate and to make a political statement as well.

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Solidarity speaks

As the following text shows, Polish Solidarity has been pressing ahead with a program for industrial self-management without waiting for the statutory changes authorizing such actions.

Individual enterprises—such as Lux Airlines and the huge Katowice steel plant—have been the scenes of initial skirmishes in employees' battle for the right to elect their general managers. This momentum of militants from below has buoyed the leadership of Solidarity (the National Consulting Commission—KKP) in its confrontations with the government. The KKP is charged with conduct of union affairs between sessions of the National Delegates Congress, by statute Solidarity's highest policy-making body.

"The appeal to Polish society" that follows was adopted by the KKP on Aug. 13, 1981. It presents practical details of the plan for self-management worked out by Solidarity activists from a network of major industrial plants.

At the first session of the Solidarity Congress (Sept. 6-9) the full delegate assembly approved a strong resolution in favor of the network plan and rejecting the government's proposals. Two weeks later, a negotiating team from the KKP agreed to a compromise that offered to share power with the government in running plants and electing their managers.

Many rank-and-file delegates at the Congress, which reconvened Sept. 26, have angrily denounced this compromise as an abrogation of the unequivocal stance adopted earlier. They do not agree with the negotiating team that the Polish parliament's endorsement of the compromise is a victory in itself simply because it frustrates the government's plan to retain total control.

The deliberations at this concluding session of the Congress, the policies adopted and the results of elections to union posts will determine the direction of Solidarity for the months to come.

By Andrzej Tymowski

(The National Consultative Commission [KKP], Solidarity's central body, met in executive session on Aug. 11-13. At the close of its deliberations the KKP issued an appeal to union members and society at large. The text of this appeal was published in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Krakow, on Aug. 23. The following excerpts constitute approximately one-third of the original.)

The overriding concern of working people, and the most serious threat to our social and national interest, is the worsening economic crisis. Everyone's attention is fixed on this problem; there is no higher priority for action. If production drops further, we will be faced with physical starvation, increasing the likelihood of a violent explosion of social dissatisfaction and wreaking chaos throughout the land....

This disaster cannot be blamed solely on errors committed by the Gierek term and his predecessors. The underlying cause of this crisis is the system of economic administration and the way the country has been governed. For a long time this system has been clumsy and wasteful, but now it has ceased to function altogether. Designed to rule in the absence of democratic freedoms, it finds itself powerless when decisions from above might be resisted by society. Neither the managerial mechanisms administering the economy nor the state institutions charged with satisfying people's day-to-day needs are able to do their work effectively. A democratic restructuring of these institutions is indispensable for them to resume proper function. Otherwise we cannot hope to escape this crisis and to safeguard adequately the livelihoods of working people. Therefore our union is already undertaking measures toward self-management reform....

Authentic self-management can only be based on a thoroughgoing, radical



economic reform that unequivocally repudiates the top-down system of distribution by executive order....

Solidarity supports the formation of organs of self-management. The KKP asks all Employees' Councils now forming to take immediate steps toward the



Poland's new union will take responsibility for increasing productivity.

overhaul of the economy at the enterprise level, to eliminate bureaucratic absurdities and waste, and improve cooperation among factories....

Rationing and production.

The Social Supervisory Commission—called into being by the KKP and the regional offices of Solidarity to oversee the production, circulation and distribution of food—in conjunction with the Solidarity Union of Independent Farmers, will undertake to make more efficient the wholesale purchase and allocation of meat. The rationing of other items currently in effect (such as cigarettes, coffee and hosiery) must be made fair and equitable....

The KKP is of the opinion that Silesia-Dabrowa and other mining regions, since

they have few resources for self-subsistence, should be granted priority for food supplies. The KKP appeals to the government to act on this principle as soon as possible. Should it fail to do so, we will take the remedial action necessary ourselves. This will require activity ranging beyond conventional union concerns, especially in supplying the needs of agriculture, production for miners and for export, as well as the production of other high priority items, raw materials and fuel....

The KKP appeals to all sections of the union to cease all hunger demonstrations and strikes calling for improved food supplies. Society has made its position quite clear on this problem....

Before August (1980)—and after—the government frequently pleaded for increased efforts in production. These pleas went largely unheeded because they were nothing more than calls for speed-up. Solidarity, on the other hand, has set specific goals for action and now calls on working people to take our economic recovery into their own hands, to take the initiative and see it through until it bears fruit.

To all union members and the nations' work crews the KKP now issues a plea unprecedented in the annals of the independent union movement:

Let us sacrifice our free time for our own economic recovery—let us work eight "free Saturdays" from now until the end of the year. We realize that this would often overtax the health of working people and expose them to unsafe working conditions. This is an extraordinary remedy and a dramatic one; but the times are extraordinarily dramatic. The KKP directs this plea above all to workers in certain specific industries: to miners and those work crews servicing the mining industry, to factories working for export, to those producing material needed in agriculture and to workers in the food-processing industry. The decision to respond rests entirely with the crews undertaking to work on free Saturdays. Theirs must also be the responsibility for making decisions concerning the direction production should take and for allocating the resources gained through these efforts. We are not donating these Saturday to the authorities, but to ourselves. Insofar as we do so we are here and now inaugurating the principles of self-management....

During the work periods volunteered on free Saturdays, each factory should be administered by its Founding Committee for Self-management or by its Factory Commission (the most basic union structure of Solidarity). Detailed accounts should be kept of this additional production which in its entirety should be desig-

nated to meet the most pressing shortfalls, above all in meat supplies. Putting these newly-won resources to good use according to their designation will be assured by our union's strict supervision of the process, in cooperation with the Independent Farmers' Union and the movement for self-management. Any attempt on the part of the authorities to frustrate this supervision or to exploit the goods produced in disregard of their designated use will be met with united protest from our union....

Stimulate farming.

The KKP also appeals to Factory Commission and work crews to assist in farm work to the utmost degree possible.

We appeal for thrift and inventiveness beyond the means of bureaucratic structure: let scientists and investors, tradesmen, theoreticians and practitioners come to the aid of work brigades to increase productive capacity through their own ideas and resources.

If Polish society responds to our appeal, then Solidarity must do everything to keep all extra production under constant scrutiny in order that the increased efforts of working people not be wasted. This will constitute the first great test of the constructive power of employees' self-management. For instance, it is obvious that the extra coal produced under the trusteeship of miners' representatives should be turned over primarily to farmers....

As the time for Solidarity's first national congress draws near, we are challenged to design a model of social life which would create the preconditions of self-management both in workplaces and in territorial administrations....

We firmly believe that nothing will stand in the way of our good intentions. But we must declare in no-uncertain terms that we will resist all attacks against our union, its activists or its publications. Any attempt to hinder our proposals for resolving the crisis or to obstruct the supervision of production and distribution of food or to retard the self-managed reform of the economy will be answered by the union as a whole, through all available statutory remedies including strike action. We will defend the union against slander. We declare that monopolistic rule over the mass media serves only to exacerbate social tension. The long-term national interest demands a defense of our union rights: we believe that the only adequate answer to the government's attacks on Solidarity through the mass media must be strike action by workers in those industries. We will respond to such attacks by refusing to print the daily papers.

The National Consultative Commission



The justices of the Supreme Court: From left Justices Blackmun, Marshall, Brennan, Burger, O'Connor, White, Powell, Rehnquist and Stevens. With Stewart Potter's resignation and Sandra O'Connor's appointment, the Court now has its first woman justice.

PERSPECTIVES

Can the Court simply enforce law?

By John Denvir

THE SO-CALLED CONSTITUTIONAL experts are eagerly awaiting the U.S. Supreme Court's fall term in order to find out whether or not Sandra O'Connor will fulfill President Reagan's pledge to appoint a Supreme Court justice who will "enforce, not make the law."

She won't. Remember, you read it here first.

At first glance, Reagan's comments seem more a truism than a pledge; of course legislators, not judges, should make the law. In truth, this doctrine (often called "strict construction") is anything but a truism. If followed, it would work a radical transformation of the American political system.

For instance, the Supreme Court recently ruled that the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution does not prevent Congress from requiring young men, but not young women, from registering for the draft. The Court found this a "hard case"; three Justices dissented. Yet, under a regime of "strict construction," this would be an easy case. The only question the Court would ask itself is "Did the drafters of the Fifth Amendment intend" to prevent Congress from classifying on the basis of sex in legislating a draft? The answer is clearly "no." Sex discrimination is a 20th-century concept, unavailable to the 18th-century drafters of the Bill of Rights. If limited to "intent," almost all current constitutional controversies would elicit the same quick negative.

In contemporary constitutional practice, the most important texts are the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. They account for well over half of the Supreme Court's caseload. This proportion would quickly change if we limited their contemporary content to the intent of the Amendment's drafters. The Fourteenth Amendment was drafted in order to give

a constitutional base for the Civil Rights Act of 1866 which outlawed the infamous Black Codes passed by Southern states immediately after the Civil War.

If we limited the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses to this specific intent, most of current constitutional doctrine would disappear. Not only would controversial decisions, like those requiring busing and granting the right to choose an abortion be reversed, but many less controversial decisions, like those applying the rights of free speech and free exercise of religion to the states, would suffer a similar fate. The Fourteenth Amendment would cease to protect the rights of criminal defendants. Even *Brown V. Board of Education* would be endangered since there is good evidence that the drafters had no intention of prohibiting segregated schools.

In short, "strict construction" would result in the termination of the Supreme Court's role as the major defender of individual rights in our political system. So phrased, it seems odd that confessed "conservatives" should endorse this result, as at the time the Constitution was written, it was the monied class who insisted on judicial review as a check on the "radical" legislatures.

Present day conservatives, however, discovered two realities. First, money and organization are key ingredients in the legislative process and that their clever utilization permits the powerful groups in society to have disproportionate influence; they normally find the legislative process adequate to protect their interests. Second, the Supreme Court since the '30s has operated as a counterweight to that influence, protecting "insular minorities" from the unjust results of the legislative process.

In this respect, therefore, Reagan's embrace of strict construction can be seen as one more program that "tilts" towards the rich; how clever to gut the Constitution by means of an appeal to its symbolic power: "enforce not make the law!"

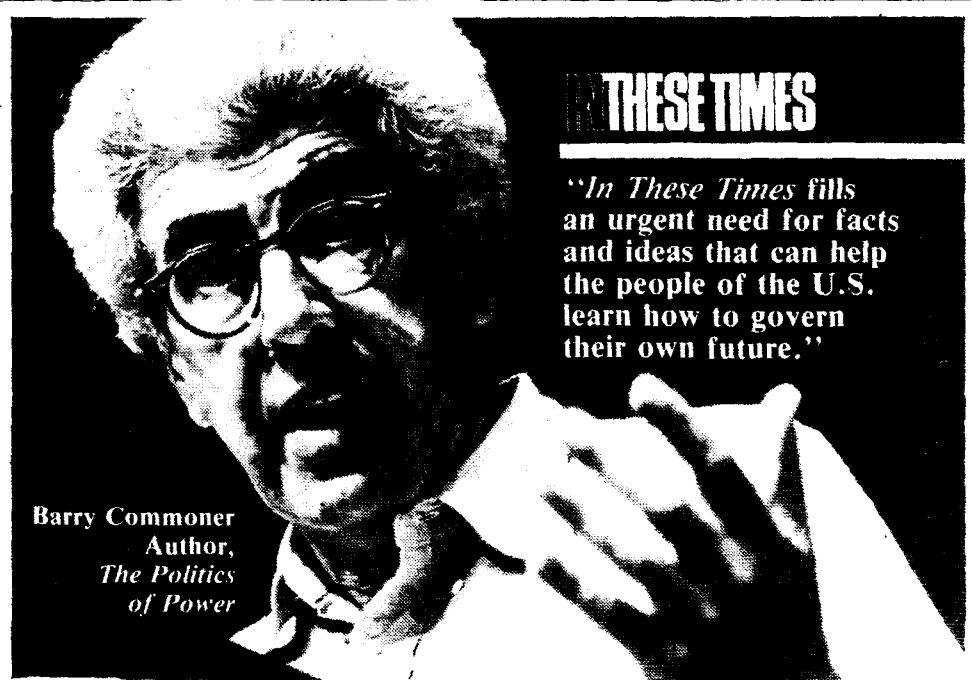
Still, no matter what Justice O'Connor's political sympathies, it is not likely she will practice "strict construction"; no

modern Supreme Court Justice has. Perhaps this is because the tradition of the judicial protection of individual rights is so well entrenched in our legal culture. Maybe judges are just viscerally hostile to a doctrine that would so diminish their power. All contemporary Supreme Court Justices, many appointed by Richard Nixon who also espoused "strict construction," implicitly accept the tenet that individuals do have rights against the majority and that these rights are not rigidly time-bound. Furthermore, in determining the scope of individual rights, judges cannot defer to the legislature that passed the law challenged as this in effect would allow the legislature to be the judge of its own case. So the mythology of strict construction lives even though it has little or no effect on constitutional practice. Its primary use is for public relations, as a slogan that permits judges to pick and choose the cases in which they will read the Constitution expansively. Recently, they discovered that the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment intended to protect the rights of corporations like Exxon to make campaign expenditures to defeat political referenda of which the corporation disapproves. A "good" decision? Maybe or maybe not, but certainly not one merely enforcing the law.

In the draft registration case, the Court was faced with a claim of violation of individual rights, actually two claims. Young men said their right to be treated as equals was violated in that a duty was imposed on them from which equally capable women were exempted. Young women claimed that they were not being treated as equals but were being classified on the basis of a stereotype that stigmatized them as being inferior to young men, a stereotype that prevents them from fleeing (in Justice Brennan's phrase) "the gilded cage" society has prepared for them. Three Justices agreed with these claims, six did not.

The majority ruled that the right to be free from stereotypical sex classifications must be construed narrowly, at least in cases involving (however tangentially) national security. This choice of a narrow conception of individual rights is a controversial one that we should judge on its moral merits, not on the basis of a slogan. In choosing it, the majority did not any more than the dissenters "enforce" rather than "make" the law. Like the dissenters, they did both. For judges, there is no other choice.

John Denvir teaches at the University of San Francisco School of Law.



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HEALTH



Yoshiko Michitsuji's drawing recalling the day of the Hiroshima atomic blast, from the anthology of survivors' drawings, *UNFORGETTABLE FIRE*.

Lessons of the bomb

Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombing
Basic Books, \$37.50, 706 pp.

By Robert M. Nelson

On May 12, 1946, Louis Slotin, an atomic weapons physicist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, was doing an experiment that has come to be popularly called "twitching the dragon's tail." He was pushing several pieces of plutonium closer and closer together and monitoring the increase in the flux of neutrons emitted from the limited chain reaction that was taking place. He inadvertently pushed them too closely together, the neutron flux monitors registered increases to lethal levels.

To spare the lives of seven co-workers in the laboratory, Slotin separated the plutonium pieces with his bare hands, with full knowledge that in doing so he would lose his own life. He then carefully marked the locations of himself and his co-workers at the time of the event so that the data could be used as a clinical experiment to establish dose thresholds for humans. Slotin died nine days later. His actions are often lauded by some as the ultimate demonstration of dedication of the individual to intellectual endeavor.

Nine months earlier the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had occurred. The inhabitants of those cities did not have Slotin's luxury of choice and

control of fate. The survivors of those events and their families have spent three decades trying to have the world understand the significance of their sacrifice.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki represents the findings of the Japanese-based Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One of its inescapable conclusions is that a nuclear bombing is not an isolated occurrence but a profound disruption of a social fabric involving several physical, medical, psychological and social consequences that extend for many years after the event. While the book divides the physical, medical and social aspect of the bombing into sep-

arate sections, it demonstrates clearly that these areas are closely intertwined.

The first studies of the effects of the bombings were carried out by the local emergency rescue forces and this work was subsequently taken over by the military occupation forces that arrived shortly after the Japanese surrender. The primary effects on humans were burn and blast injuries, radiation sickness and the aftereffects of fallout. Ninety percent of the fatalities occurred within the first two weeks. Those who were not immediately killed by blast and thermal effects were killed by infection, usually compounded by a reduction in the strength of the body's natural defense mechanisms caused by the radiation from the bombs. The total number of fatalities from the immediate effects was about 190,000, including a handful of American POWs at each city.

The military occupation forces were not interested in the long-term effects of the bombings, or any follow-up studies on the survivors. Therefore much of the research in this area occurred only because of local pressure from the victims and their supporters. Even the long-term effects of radiation sickness, a new human disease, were not aggressively studied in the period immediately following the end of the war. Despite these handicaps, the committee that produced this book has reviewed, assembled and interpreted research from many sources to give a complete picture of the impact of the bombings.

The determination of the amount of radiation dose for an exposed individual is complicated by many factors such as location at the time of the event, the amount of shielding and behavior after the event. Many who were exposed to the "black rain" or fallout were never examined adequately until much later, and then it was difficult to establish accurately the amount of exposure.

Furthermore, many effects did not show up for years or even decades after the bombings. It was a full decade before

it was noted that children irradiated in utero had a higher incidence of microcephaly, though other developmental problems such as smaller stature had earlier been noted. The correlation between cataracts and atomic bomb exposure took several years to establish. Women who had been irradiated experienced menopause three years earlier on the average than the rest of the Japanese population. These last two findings have led to the speculation that in general, radiation exposure accelerates aging.

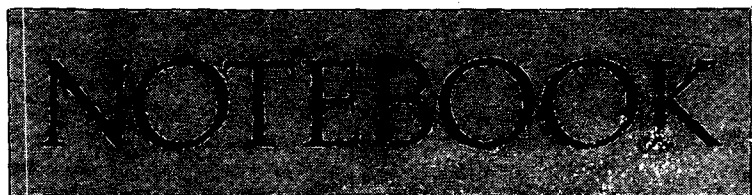
The report also relates some unexpected results. For example, the fertility rates of irradiated women did not significantly decrease, even though many men and women showed disorders of the reproductive system immediately after exposure (e.g., amenorrhea, low sperm count). Apparently those who did recover reproductive function conceived children at the same rate as the society as a whole, though the incidence of stillbirths was higher. This finding stands as a testimony to the recuperative abilities of the human body.

Cancer.

Of the many serious long-term effects of the bombings, two of the most serious are leukemia and cancer, and these data from Hiroshima and Nagasaki have assumed an acute significance for society today. By 1975, it was found that those exposed to large doses of radiation had a leukemia incidence that was seven times higher than the rest of the Japanese population. Furthermore, it was believed that the incidence of leukemia at Nagasaki was lower than it was at Hiroshima, given an equivalent radiation dose. This has been explained traditionally by noting that the Hiroshima bomb was a uranium fission device and the one at Nagasaki was based on plutonium fission. The uranium fission bomb was expected to yield relatively more neutrons and fewer gamma rays than the plutonium one.

Because it was believed that neutrons were more damaging

Continued on page 23



Song for Anninho

By Gayl Jones
Lotus Press, P.O. Box 21607,
Detroit, MI 48221
88 pp., \$4.50

Gayl Jones is among the leading American black women writers. Best known for her novels *Corregidora* (1975) and *Eva's Man* (1976), she also has published plays, short satires, and short poems. *Song for Anninho* is her first book-length poem, adapted from her yet-unpublished novel *Palmares* (the name of a settlement founded by rebel slaves in 17th-century Brazil). *Song for Anninho* begins at the time of the defeat of the Palmares rebels by a regiment of Portuguese colonialists. Almeyda, a rebel slave woman who is captured by the Portuguese, has her breasts sliced off, and is tossed in a river to die. But Almeyda survives and much of what follows consists of her memories of her lost lover, the rebel slave leader Anninho. These recollections constitute an affirmation of courage and hope for

Afro-Americans, despite the terrible defeat of the present moment. Jones uses oral traditions, fusing memories of family stories and Afro-American history with a love of language in part inspired by Chaucer and Joyce. While male-female relations among blacks is the central theme in most of her work, her writing is also animated by a social vision—especially in regard to the black experience in the U.S. and Latin America. Her poetry, prose and drama show the influences of Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel Garcia Marquez almost as much as Zora Neale Hurston and Billie Holiday. **AW**

Peace Is Our Profession

Ed. by Jan Barry
East River Anthology, 75 Gates
Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042
294 pp., \$5.95 plus \$1 postage
and handling

The title of this collection of poems, essays and graphics derives from a Strategic Air Command slogan. The book provides a bracing retrospective of

the international peace movement directed at the War in Indochina. Among the 141 contributors are such known writers as Wendell Berry, Gloria Emerson, Grace Paley, Muriel Rukeyser, Teo Savory, Gilbert Sorrentino and activists such as Daniel Berrigan, Daniel Ellsberg and Joan Baez. Writings come from American school children, Vietnamese soldiers (North and South), and American veterans. Jeff Miller, one of four students killed by the National Guard at Kent State, is represented with his poem, "Where Does It End," followed by an excerpt concerning that demonstration from Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July*. Denise Levertov adds to the litany: "black students shot at Orangeburg... Fred Hampton murdered in his bed by the police..." and the killings of black students at Jackson, Miss., where their deaths caused no desecrations to be uttered in "white folks' chapel, because no memorial service was held." A New York psychiatrist, who had treated survivors of the Holocaust, related his revulsion and astonishment when one of his new clients, a Vietnam vet, told him "that among 140 Vietnamese he killed in Vietnam, there were 34 children, who he machine-gun-

ned by accident." Yet the therapist recovered to give such aid as he could "because we are all in this together.... Every American taxpayer paid an average of \$3,300 for the Vietnam war. If you don't yet quite see how connected you were, eventually you will." Indeed. **KH**



Graphic artwork from *PEACE IS OUR PROFESSION*.

Powerline: The First Battle of America's Energy War

By Barry M. Casper and Paul David Wellstone
University of Massachusetts Press, 328 pp., \$7.95
Last New Year's Eve the 15th tower of a hard-fought power-

line fell to the ground in Minnesota. This book answers the question, why do law-abiding, church-going farmers celebrate sabotage? The authors, a political scientist and a physicist, detail the origins and execution of the project—a high voltage D.C. powerline that equals the largest in the U.S. and is part of an energy grid that serves seven states. Farmers near the proposed route went to public hearings, the courts and into the fields to protect their family farms and the land. More than 100 were arrested for acts of civil disobedience, and sabotage continues.

Interviews with those fighting the line make the book read like a novel. The authors talk to angry, strong people with a sense of humor. They successfully blend individual stories with descriptions of battles and guerrilla attacks. The authors finally conclude that our government's energy policy is on a collision course with rural America. Still to be written are accounts of other changes resulting from the fight—how prejudices have broken down, for instance, between urban and rural people, farmers and Indians. **VL**

Contributors: Ken Harper, Vicki Lofquist, Alan Wald.

By Pat Aufderheide

Dark End of the Street recounts an interracial crisis in a Boston-area housing project. It shows the way racial fear blows apart a small circle of friends, and how the prejudices of a wider world mold young people into familiar patterns.

Dark End of the Street is one of the success stories of the American independent film movement. It's been warmly praised for being so slice-of-life real, but "slice-of-life" seems a poor term—both inanimate and patronizing—for what is good about it. Without sentimentality it uses crisis not as a soap-operatic lever—a melodramatic universalizer—but as a chance to show the conditions that created it, and that it in turn creates.

What makes the film work is not so much technical competence, although writer-director Jan Egleson has adequate story-telling and scene-mounting skills. The film's virtues come from Egleson's careful translation of what poor black and white kids in the projects have told him over the years, and from their own depiction of that reality (most of the actors come from the projects). That's why a film "about racism" never becomes a condescending, TV-style issue film, why even at its most soap-boxy moments (and it has them) it doesn't get sanctimonious too.

Drama class.

Egleson got to know these kids through a drama program that his wife, Patricia Collinge and her colleague Steve Seidel put together at an alternative school for working-class kids in Cambridge. Egleson, an actor, saw that acting allowed the kids to learn about themselves and that he thus learned about their world.

With some cost to preconceptions, he learned that white and black kids play and work together in the projects, in an environment that trendy Cambridge and proper Boston never even think about except in the cheapest of clichés. He watched poverty and

hard luck form their attitudes and limit their lives. And in acting classes he watched kids become self-aware. One student, Henry Tomaszewski, went from a tough, close-lipped brooder to a young man with self-respect and the courage for curiosity.

Eventually Egleson and friends—as the Fund for Theater and Film (FTF)—raised money to make an independent feature with Group School kids and starring Tomaszewski, *Billy in the Lowlands*. The film had unexpected success, airing on Boston's public TV station WGBH, winning an Emmy in 1979 and eventually being sold to European TV stations and Los Angeles' Channel Z. When Egleson set out to make a followup film WGBH pitched in start-up funds to supplement sales revenues and the FTF folks incurred a nervous-making \$150,000 debt to make this new feature.

Dark End of the Street changes the focus from Billy to his girlfriend Donna (Laura Harrington), in a tale that hinges on the meaning of one black boy's death. It's been a typical hot summer evening and the kid (Terence Gray) has been cruising for trouble all night. After a fight with Billy during a softball game he starts drinking, stands up his girlfriend (Michelle Green, whose skittish friendship with Donna is well-evoked) and teases Billy and Donna, who are trying to make out, from the rooftop. He plays one joke too many and slips off the edge of the roof.

The carefully-textured recounting of that evening has shown us



Harrington and Tomaszewski play lovers caught in the twisted logic of racism.

a bunch of tough, rowdy, even careless kids. But what the cops and the TV crews see is a scandal.

Who killed the boy? Who pushed him? The question, once posed, inflames a black com-

munity suspicious that the cops will either gloss over the investigation or find an easy black suspect; and it terrifies Billy and Donna, dividing them from their black friends. Distrust blooms, panic spurts, violence flares.

Women's lives.

Because the hard decisions are Donna's—should she tell what she saw, risking that the cops will think Billy pushed him?—the film offers glimpses into the daily lives of the women in the projects. Donna's problem forces her to draw on all the resources of her cramped life, putting in jeopardy her love affair and driving

her to flirt ever more outrageously with her mother's trucker boyfriend (Lance Hendrikson). Harrington plays these moments as a pouting tease with terrifying accuracy. She convinces us that her out-of-control sexuality comes from desperation as well as boredom with her options—as a waitress, a babysitter, a tough girl.

The film goes into factories, postage-stamp-sized yards, rooftops, prisons and backlots in an understated tour of what for many viewers is alien territory (and that's how the TV anchorwoman appears to regard it when she steps gingerly out of her car with a microphone). This is the environment in which the kids' attitudes take shape.

The group is marked by a crude humor, full of practical jokes and ruthless retorts, one that makes accidents and fights likely while it also makes the normal cruelties of a poverty-filled life tolerable. They perpetually make do, armed with the two-sided shield of resignation and anger. Long before this the kids have become used to living with failure—with being told no, being stood up, showing up late for work, being distrusted by bosses and disapproved of by cops and well-dressed passers-by. The crisis that the death provokes erodes some of their fragile defenses—interracial loyalties, group solidarity and love affairs—and so it has a special poignancy.

Not that Egleson has the glitches out of the presentation of this rich material. An actor first, he tends to write and stage scenes for actors, whether or not the young people have the power to convince in the scene and whether or not an intense moment is more appropriate than another kind of exposition. Further, the film's continuity falters at times. People are dropped off at one place and surface in another in ways that make us piece together ourselves what has happened—a distancing effect that was undoubtedly not intended.

But this kind of stuff is predictable, between a low budget, inexperience and the lack of institutional backup services of the kind novice Hollywood producers can depend on. If it makes for a bumpy ride, it's still worth it. The logic of racism isn't simple and the inevitable mix of poverty, sexual discrimination and racial bias is one that makes for crisis. But not, *Dark End of the Street* tells us, the way you see it on the evening news. ■

For distribution information contact First Run Features, 419 Park Ave. S., NY, NY 10016.

FILM CLIPS

Gallipoli (Columbia)

As self-consciously anguished ads suggest, this is an overblown boy's war picture. Director is Peter Weir, who also made *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Last Wave*. Two young men, one idealist and one pragmatist, join WWI Australian forces fighting on the Turkish peninsula of Gallipoli. The pointless slaughter that ensues has no effect on any of the characters—the leads in particular have attitudes carved in stone—but shows us that war is hell and that the English abused the naive Australians' slave to duty loyalty. The film has some of Weir's vaunted eerie lyricism in combination with epic ambition, and the result is *A Bridge Too Far* meets *Elvira Madigan*. One compensation is that Weir (unfortunately with unrelenting arch irony) depicts a totally male public world in early 20th century Australia, then shows the high cost of being macho once the boys go to war. If you're getting the feeling you need to know more about Australian film (*Gallipoli* was marketed

as the breakthrough mass success) you might consult the overview-with-pictures *The New Australian Cinema* (\$19.95, distributed by New York Zoetrope, 31 E. 12th St., NY, NY 10003).

Continental Divide (Universal)

So it's not Hepburn and Tracy. (Lawrence Kasdan, also scripter for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Body Heat*, is practiced at imitations of art; he gets form, not substance every time.) It's still plenty of fun. John Belushi plays—what a relief—a real person, an ultra-urban investigative journalist who falls in love with Blair Brown as a professional birdwatcher who lives in the mountains. The weakly convincing love story is worth wading through for the urban scenes and the punchy jokes on costs and limits of printing facts about the powerful. The film doesn't give ground on the woman's professional dedication. It is a welcome change to see a screen romance flower between two adults, both already interesting and established. It's just too bad you have to be so

grateful for a film that's not downright cruel to its own characters these days.

Pesticides and Pills: For Export Only

By Robert Richter

NonFiction TV, PBS, Oct. 5

& 7 (check local listings)

NonFiction, a First Amendment bastion in broadcasting for its funding and production help for independent filmmakers, opens its fourth season of films stressing pluralism in both opinion and style with this two-part documentary. The filmmaker also made, among many other documentaries, *Vietnam: An American Journey* and recently won the Dupont-Columbia Journalism Award for a documentary on toxic chemicals and health, *A Plague on Our Children*. Part one focuses on export of farm chemicals to overseas growers, showing how the effects come back to haunt us in our food. (Research from the Food First Institute's *Circle of Poison* and interviews with author David Weir are used.) Part II concerns export of banned or restricted drugs to other countries; *Mother Jones* readers will be familiar with the issue. The film was shot in the U.S., Latin America, Asia and Africa.

—Pat Aufderheide

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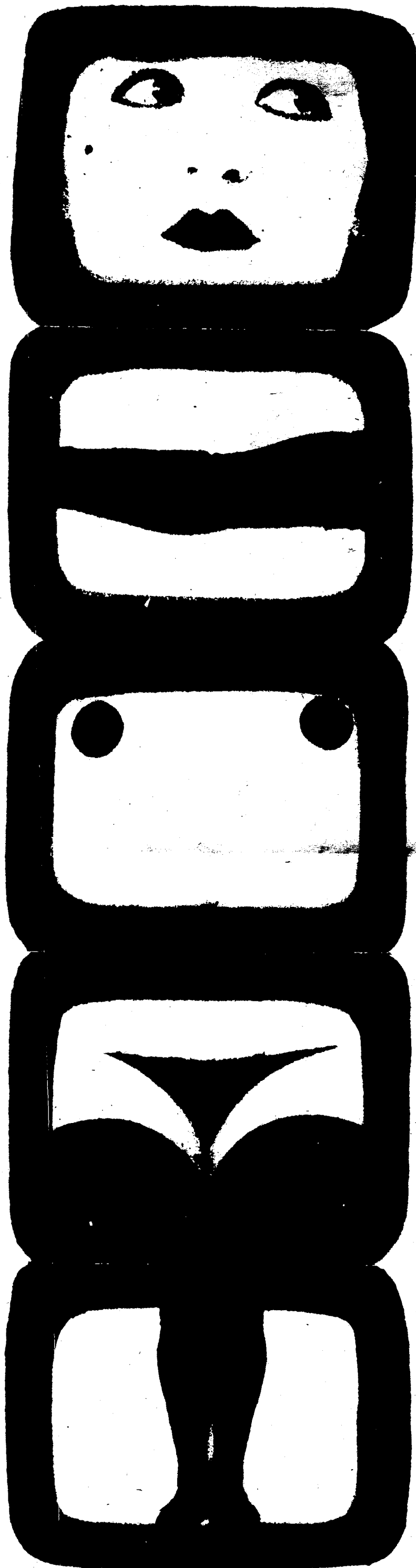
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Friederike Pezold's "female structuralist" work was part of a show of new video art in Germany.

ARTS POLICY

The Germans invest in cultural controversy

By Michael Gallant

The Goethe Institute, the organization that handles most of West Germany's cultural diplomacy, doesn't think much of Goethe. "We've had numerous requests to sponsor the well-known plays of Goethe and Schiller, but we turn them down," says Ernst Schurmann, director in charge of cultural cooperation at the Goethe Institute of San Francisco. "We've also given up on classical and romantic chamber music—it's well-represented on the commercial market."

But the Goethe Institute enthusiastically finances the international distribution of political films like *Knife in the Back* and *Germany in Autumn*, both of which deal with contemporary Germany's very real repression.

West Germany's cultural diplomacy is part of a massive program of government sponsorship of the arts. Germany spends more on its opera than the U.S. spent on all the arts, even before the Reagan cutbacks. And West German cultural largesse has certainly helped make German culture a significant presence on the American artistic scene. But German cultural diplomacy is as interesting for what it spends its money on as for the amount of money it spends.

West Germany's progressive approach to international cultural policy has flourished even in a repressive period in domestic German politics, with ironically contradictory results. The same director the Goethe Institute brought to San Francisco to direct a controversial German play had lost an established, salaried position as a result of political repression at home; on the other hand, the sharply critical political films brought here by the Institute were produced with public funding from the state TV network that has financed most German films since the late '60s.

While potential opposition to Reagan's dismantling of government cultural programs is confused by the sense that government funding necessarily leads to censorship, the West German example suggests the merits of a less fatalistic approach.

Founded in 1951 to provide German language courses to foreigners, the Goethe Institute has since taken over the cultural functions of West Germany's diplomatic missions. It is now a worldwide network of 114 branches in 65 countries with a total annual budget of about \$100 million a year. Sixty-five percent of this comes from the German government, the rest from the Goethe Institute's own revenues from its language courses. The Institute's relationship with its government as a private contractor for cultural diplomacy is unique, and the intent of this arrangement is, in Ernst Schurmann's words, that "cultural activities should be unhampered by day-to-day political activities."

Schurmann does a good job of documenting that this independence is real, and both recipients of Goethe Institute funding and

independent observers back him up. The German Consul-General can veto a cultural program, although it has only happened, according to Schurmann, twice or three times and never in the U.S. The veto applies only to involvement in party politics and to programs detrimental to the image of another country. It does not apply to programs with a strong but not explicitly partisan political content, no matter how critical of the existing German regime.

The Goethe Institute does turn down many requests for money, not because they're too controversial, but, as with Goethe and Schiller, because they're not controversial enough. If the Dr. Strangelove stereotype of Germany as the authoritarian and militaristic land of "blood and iron" is the prevailing stereotype of our times, there is an even older stereotype of Germany embodied in the early 19th century saying, "Providence has given to the French the empire of the land; to the English that of the sea; to the Germans that of the air!" The Goethe Institute seems determined to bring culture down to earth by placing it in its historical context, by emphasizing the contemporary over the classical, and by asking about the contemporary relevance of the culture of earlier historical periods.

Total programming.

Take the Expressionism exhibit. Called "Expressionism: A German Intuition 1905-1920," it used money from the West German government, our own National Endowment for the Arts and one corporate sponsor, Philip Morris, to bring 330 works by 18 artists from the Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany, to two American museums. Alone this exhibit would have been spectacular, yes, but in a way not unusual—only this year's once-in-a-lifetime art event, publicized and perceived as great art devoid of any historical context.

But when the San Francisco Goethe Institute heard about the exhibit, they suggested to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art that they cooperate closely on a program to "give the public a better chance to understand the cultural environment of Expressionism." The result was two-and-a-half months of programming about Expressionism's epoch—a concert series, films, lectures, a university extension class and a theatrical production.

In a similar way the San Francisco Goethe Institute created many other local German cultural events—all with a 20th-century and many with a completely contemporary focus. Before the Expressionism exhibit they presented showings of and lectures about German video and performance art. They chose video art "precisely because it's a new art form and generates the same questions and problems in both countries, which makes contact between different national scenes especially important." In the works is a program on "industrial culture."

According to Schurmann, "In

the last 20 years it's been quite obvious in both Germany and the U.S. that there's an interest in preserving the heritage of industrial cultural phenomena. Ten years ago a lot became obsolete; people began to dismantle gas lights, coal mines, railroads. So we put together a program. It includes the 19th century, but it's not merely historical but about what it would mean today if we dismantled everything not needed for economic needs."

In the U.S. the Goethe Institute spends roughly \$2 million annually—about \$300,000 each through branches in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco, twice that through New York, which cosponsors a subsidiary project in Cincinnati with the state university there, and much less at the fledgling Houston branch.

The Goethe Institutes in different cities have different focuses, although Schurmann estimates that popular response to contemporary German art is about equal in San Francisco, New York and Boston. In Chicago the Goethe Institute has focused on film programming, such as retrospectives of filmmakers Alexander Kluge and Peter Lilinethal, programs of experimental film and photography from 1919-1939 and works by women filmmakers. In connection with a University of Munich project on German working-class immigrants to Chicago, the Institute will sponsor lectures by a labor historian and a film series on 19th-century German labor history.

In New York, which along with Washington, D.C., gets most of the blockbuster projects, the Goethe House is starting a year-long project on the theme of Germany in the 19th century in conjunction with an exhibit of 19th-century German art at the Metropolitan Museum. Even in Los Angeles, which has no Goethe Institute, the German government has backed an enormous \$1.5 million, two-month Berlin-Los Angeles sister-city celebration of culture, science and industry.

Help from overseas.

But perhaps the most interesting and innovative aspect of the Institute programming is its sponsorship of American artists in collaborative projects. A decade ago the Institute brought over only ready-made German productions. San Francisco became a showcase for a new approach when, through Schurmann's mediation, the local Julian Theater produced a play by Botho Strauss. Strauss is a German playwright of the '60s generation. None of his work had been presented in English. Translator Robert Goss calls Strauss (who published an important essay in 1970 called "An Attempt to Think Political and Aesthetic Events As Two Parts of the Same Thing") a writer who rebels against the political compromises of the older generation.

In 1977 the Julian presented Goss' translation of Strauss' *The Hypochondriacs*. New York then followed San Francisco's lead with a Goethe Institute-

backed translation and production of Strauss' *Big and Little* at the Phoenix Theater in 1979. It didn't do well, but in 1980 Schurmann went back to the Julian for *Three Acts of Recognition*, a more expensive play with a bigger cast, and gave them \$17,000 seed money followed by more later. They also brought over the famous German director Dieter Giesing to direct the Julian's production. The result was a critically acclaimed production on most local critics' 10 best list last year. When the production toured Los Angeles the Goethe Institute brought over the playwright and provided funding to pay the actors during the tour.

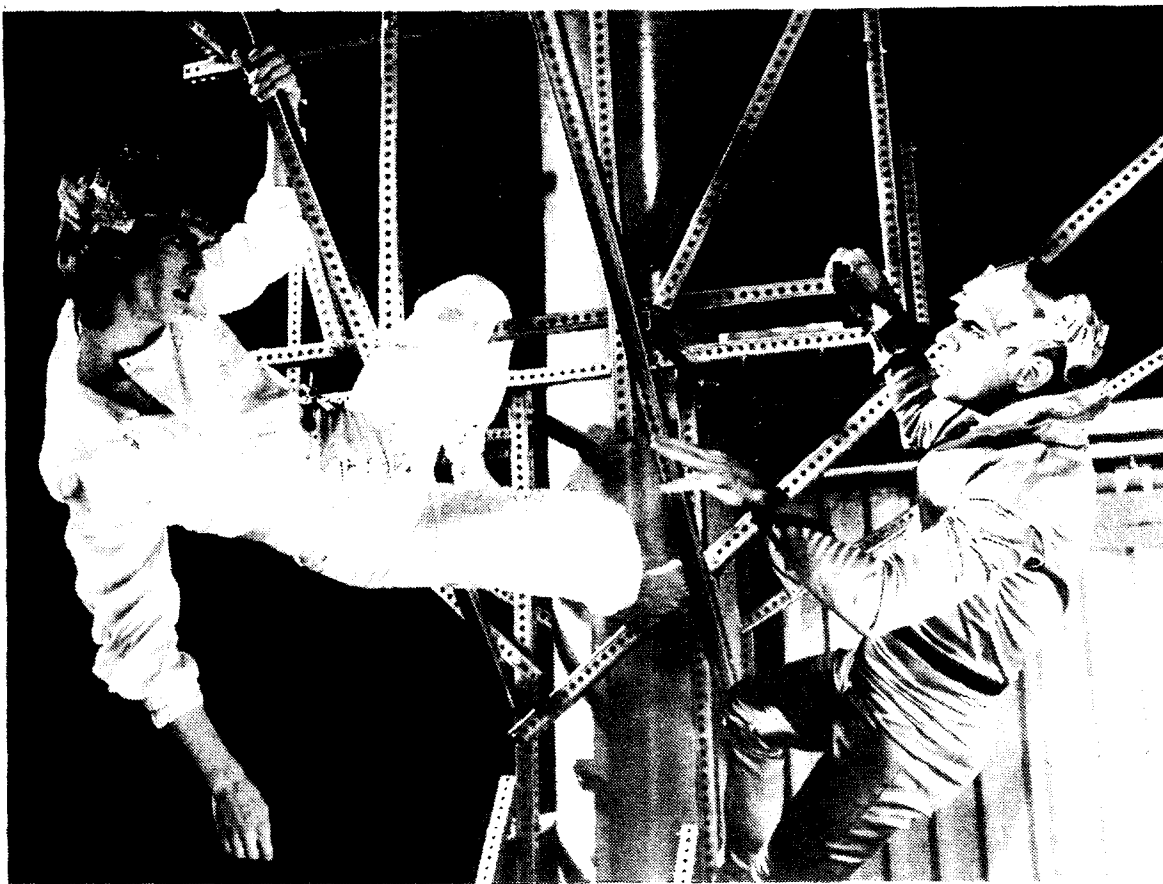
Next the Goethe Institute went to San Francisco's Magic Theatre, nationally known as the home base of Pulitzer winner Sam Shepard.

"Schurmann wanted to give funds for an as-yet-untranslated play," said the Magic's Martin Esslin. "I initiated the idea of [Georg Kaiser's] *Europa*. He didn't know the play. He looked over the translation, of course, but there were no strings." *Europa*, an Expressionist mixture of spoken drama and ballet, needs sets and choreography that would ordinarily make it prohibitively expensive for a small company.

In spite of terror.

This enlightened approach to cultural diplomacy persisted through the turn towards repression taken by West German politics after the terrorism at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Three reasons seem to account for its resilience. After the totalitarianism of the Third Reich, Schurmann says, "the most important objective of German foreign policy was to establish confidence abroad, to prove that we are really a democratic country."

Frederic Tubach, professor of German at the University of California at Berkeley, says that in the last five to eight years the Germans have felt a new self-confidence, one that also reflects itself in international dealings. As both domestic and international pressures prevent the Bonn Republic from playing the military role of a great power, culture has been especially



The Goethe Institute provided funds for a production of the Expressionist drama *EUROPA*.

important in this new self-assertiveness. The Goethe Institute's budget, like the overall West German budget for cultural diplomacy, has steadily increased faster than the rate of inflation.

It shouldn't be a surprise that the U.S. is a target for German cultural diplomacy. "The U.S. has an overwhelming political, economic, and intellectual importance for every European country," says Schurmann. "The Germans are genuinely scared of becoming isolated in Europe and fear that the Atlantic is widening," adds Tubach. The number of Goethe Institute branches in the U.S. doubled in the last seven years, while the number worldwide has remained constant.

That West German culture has been blossoming after a long dry period has certainly added to the sense that it's worth some money to show off. "Remember," says Esslin, "that German culture was invisible for 25 years after 1933 because the Nazis were in power and it took a long time to recover."

The interest in pre-Nazi art

has also been gradually building. The 6,000 Expressionist works confiscated by the Nazis sold at auction have been rediscovered and bought back. "The Nazis ripped this art out of museums. It's as if all Renaissance pictures were banned," says Esslin. "It's taken a long time to reassess and reassemble them." Schurmann points out that this reassemblage may have occurred at a propitious moment in cultural history. "After the rationalistic approach of the '60s student movement achieved little in changing the political and social system, the Western world saw a mood of resignation and a new openness to the irrational. The most radically anti-intellectual movement of the century was German Expressionism, and it would probably have had little attraction in 1968."

But economics was just as important as culture or diplomacy in the West Germans' willingness to embark on such a large and uninhibited program of cultural export. And economics may be the limiting factor. Robert Goss makes an analogy between German prosperity in the '70s and American prosperity in the '50s.

But times are changing. "Now the tendency is to cut down budget increases to no more than the inflation factor, as fiscal things get more critical in Germany now, and we've developed a considerable deficit in the balance of payments," warns German Consul-General Lothar Schuenke. He may be optimistic—this year the Goethe Institute took an absolute cut in its budget for the first time ever.

The West German method of financing much artistic endeavor may look good from this side of the ocean, but it has its problems too. Peter Gruene, head of the San Francisco Goethe's Institute's language department and pedagogical program, points out

two difficulties. "The artists [who receive funding] form a structure, which seals off those below. Now a new group of film-

Jutta Brueckner's *YEARS OF HUNGER* was shown in a Chicago series on new Berlin women filmmakers.



makers is rebelling against the New German Cinema, which is now old. So unintentionally the government is suppressing an upcoming generation. And also because German filmmakers, for example, are independent of box office success, they don't respect their audience. They're in an ivory tower. People can walk out; the filmmakers don't care," because they're funded by the German government.

"This brings up the question of on what authority these experts decide on the quality of a program," adds Schurmann. "But what would work better?"

And many pure but hungry American artists will be apt to ask, what indeed?

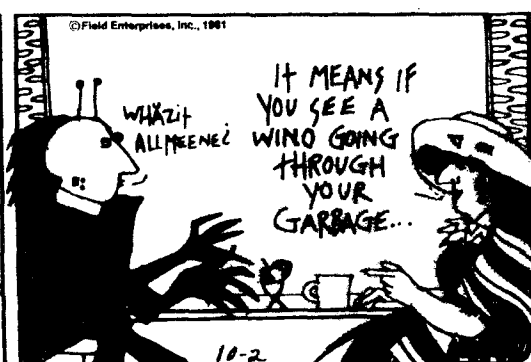
Michael Gallantz heads the film department of San Francisco's *Artbeat* magazine.

This 1920 woodcut by Max Pechstein was part of the massive Expressionism exhibit last year.



SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



Belize

Continued from page 10

In a press conference with over 150 international journalists Price defined Belize's future foreign policy as that of a nonaligned nation trying to act as a link between the countries of Central America and the Caribbean. He was not worried about the possibility of U.S. aid to the military regime in Guatemala. "The U.S. is big enough to have many friends," he said.

Guatemala is not the only problem confronting this lightly populated country, about the size of El Salvador but with only one-thirtieth the population. Many Belizeans also worry about what they call "Latinization."

Over the years some 30,000 Belizeans have emigrated to the U.S. for work. Some 2,500 a year continue to do so, most of them illegally, according to the U.S. consul's office here. At the same time, Spanish-speaking peasants from Guatemala, Mexico and other nearby countries, including some 3,000 to 5,000 war refugees from El Salvador, have moved to Belize in search of peace and open lands to farm. The Belizean government has welcomed the refugees but has asked for the UN and other international aid agencies to provide the money needed for resettlement. The government has also offered to take in Vietnamese and Haitian refugees if the international agencies will provide the funding, according to minister of state V.H. Courteney. Many people see this offer as an attempt to maintain Belize's racial and linguistic balance. "At the present time we're not

worried about a Latinization of the culture because we do not predict any major new wave of war refugees entering the country in the near future," Courteney says.

To solve the problems of unemployment and emigration as well as inadequate roads, housing and water systems, the government hopes to develop joint ventures with foreign capital within the planning limits of a mixed economy. With open lands throughout the western and southern part of the country and hundreds of off-shore coral islands strung along the world's second largest barrier reef, agriculture and tourism both hold great potential for "a careful development."

The human potential of a highly literate, racially mixed and tolerant culture that ranges from pot-growing rastafarians to chicken-rearing Mennonites may hold even greater promise if the surrounding conflicts of Central America's class wars don't engulf this newest and most fragile of nations.

David Helvarg has been on assignment for *In These Times* in Central America.

Israel

Continued from page 10

Also angering the outspoken mayor—whom the Israeli press regularly labels as "rejectionist" despite his clear support of a formal peace settlement between a Palestinian state and Israel in the pre-1967 boundaries—was the authorities' refusal to allow him to fly to the U.S. for medical treatment. Khalaf, who now walks with a cane and a brace after

losing partial use of both legs in a still-unsolved car bombing 16 months ago, was supposed to go to Houston in July, but is still waiting for permission.

One reason given for preventing him from leaving, he said, was the recent session in Amman, Jordan, of the Jordanian-PLO joint committee for the occupied territories. The mayor was annoyed but hardly surprised at not being allowed to attend, but a much more serious problem concerning the joint committee is brewing as well: Since it was established after Camp David three years ago, the body has forwarded significant funds to West Bank and Gaza municipalities, openly and above board, to be used for the usual type of city development projects—sewage, schools, roads, public buildings and so on. In 1980, Ramallah alone received about \$1 million from this source.

Khalaf displayed a letter from the West Bank military commander, dated Aug. 31—well after Sharon's announcement about making life easier for the residents under occupation. The letter, short and to the point, did not mention the Jordan-PLO committee by name, but simply forbade the city from receiving any outside funds. No substitute source for the many half-completed projects has been proposed by the military government.

But the authorities have exhibited some largesse to other, more cooperative, Palestinian leaders outside of the West Bank's main cities. Especially in the Hebron area, funding for development projects has been made available to newly formed village leagues, which have become the subject of heated debate in the Arabic press.

The village sheikhs involved claim that the leagues, by remaining apolitical, are able to get a fair deal from the military authorities. This backhanded indictment of the "political" urban leaders is rejected by Khalaf and the others, who say that the league members have no real support even in their own villages, and accuse them of being Egyptian agents or motivated in their collaboration by lucrative land deals with the Israelis.

According to Khalaf, the village league idea was thought up by Israeli university professor Menachem Milson, who formerly served as adviser to the West Bank military government. Interestingly, the

same Prof. Milson is now being touted as head of the new "civilian" government for the territories, slated to assume responsibility for all aspects of life there except security. According to the plan, middle and lower-level functionaries in the administration will soon be Palestinians, and the whole system will be transformed toward "autonomy" along whatever lines are agreed upon in the talks between Israel, Egypt and the U.S.

But Kahalaf and mayor of El-Bira, Ibrahim Jarvil—who dropped in on our conversation—scoffed at the thought that this development could lead towards their demand of complete independence. Milson, if he takes the job, together with the rest of the civil administration, will remain subservient to Israel's defense minister, who of course will remain responsible for the military aspects of occupation. And because the recognized political representative, the PLO, is a military enemy, the freedom of speech and movement of democratically elected Palestinian leaders will still be restricted "for security reasons." How, they ask, can a line be drawn between "civilian administration" and the self-defined security needs of military rule?

The point was brought home later the same day in Ramallah, when I asked a passerby for help in locating a bookstore shut down by the army last August—the very day Sharon promised to loosen restrictions—because it allegedly contained several of the thousands of books banned by the military government. We found the shuttered store, and then the stranger, Hamad Amasi, told his story.

Last year, he had a job teaching in a small village north of Jerusalem. But the pay was low, and together with other West Bank teachers, he went out on a strike that was notable for its lack of political content. After several difficult months, a compromise was reached, but Amasi had meanwhile become active in the 150-member teachers committee that coordinated the struggle. When schools reopened, he and the other leaders found themselves dismissed—by the military government. Would a civilian administration have made any difference? With a shrug of his shoulders, the 25-year-old Palestinian noted that the teachers' salaries come from Israel; it would hardly matter which branch of the defense ministry was responsible.

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The Directory is published to facilitate contact with organizations frequently referred to in the pages of *In These Times*. Each organization has paid a fee for its listing.

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1747 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Citizens Energy Project
1110 6th Street, N.W., #300
Washington, DC 20001

The Citizens Party of Illinois
109 N. Dearborn, Suite 603
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 332-2066

Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy
120 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002

C.O.I.N.-Consumers Opposed to Inflation in the Necessities
2000 P Street, N.W.
Suite 413
Washington, DC 20036

DSOC-Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee
853 Broadway, Room 801
New York, NY 10003

Midwest Academy
600 West Fullerton Ave.
Chicago, IL 60614

National Center for Economic Alternatives
2000 P Street, N.W.
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036

NAM-New American Movement
3244 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60657

New Patriot Alliance
343 S. Dearborn, Room 305
Chicago, IL 60604

Science for the People
897 Main Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Socialist Party
1011 N. 3rd St., No. 201
Milwaukee, WI 53203

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for two insertions and \$10.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 40 words or less (additional words are 35¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Bill Rehm.

CHICAGO, IL

October 9

"Democratic Communications: Some Ideas and Proposals." Speaker is Ralph Suter, an organizer of the Abortion Rights Petition Campaign and author of a plan for a democratically owned and edited mass-circulation general interest periodical. Discussion following. 828 Davis St., Evanston (near David El stop). 475-1095. For edited transcript, send \$1.00 to Box 8117, Chicago 60680.

STEPHENTOWN, NY

October 9-12

Columbus Day weekend vacation workshop at the Berkshire Forum with Jehane Dyllan performing her brilliant play about the Karen Silkwood case and discussing implications of the tragedy. Fall foliage. Write, call Berkshire Forum, Stephentown, NY 12168; (518) 733-5497.

LOS ANGELES, CA

October 15

Love it or leave it! Workshop on "Reclaiming the American Heritage" with Harry Boyte. An investigation of the abuse of America's symbols and traditions. 7:30 p.m. First Methodist Church. 813 S. Hope St. Tuition \$3.50. Sponsored by the Laurel Springs Institute. Information: (212) 625-1956.

November 6-7

Community or Chaos: Western International Conference on Economic Dislocation, the massive industrial, labor and capital shifts. Bringing together labor, religious, commun-

ity and university groups. Barry Bluestone, Bennett Harrison, Luisa Maria Rivera, Derek Shearer, Harley Shaiken. For registration information (213) 747-1522, Planning Office, 514 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007.

BINGHAMTON, NY

October 30-31

Women's Culture/Women's Politics Conference. Speakers: Mary Jo Buhle, Ann Gordon, Blanche Cook, Ellen Dubois, Phyllis Mack, Meredith Tax, Sara Ruddick. Panels, workshops: feminism, health, race, lesbians, abortion rights, unions, films, psychoanalysis. Information: History Dept., SUNY, Binghamton, NY 13901. (607) 798-2255.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

October 19

There will be a benefit concert for INFACT/ Nestle Boycott campaign with Gil Scott Heron and Dave Valentin. At the Riverview Club at 7:00 and 10:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10.00 from INFACT, 1701 University S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55405. (612) 331-2333.

November 9-13

The Citizen Heritage Center will sponsor "Reclaiming Our Culture and History," an intensive five-day session on use of cultural and historical resources in effective citizen action. Registration is limited to 25, on a first-come basis. Contact: Citizen Heritage Center, 2001 University Ave., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414. (612) 623-1800.

NEW YORK, NY

November 8

Support the Polish workers! Join labor, anti-war and social activists in an afternoon in solidarity with Solidarity. Speakers include Pete Camarata, Barbara Garson, Michael Harrington, C.L.R. James, Joanne Landy, Sam Meyers, Grace Paley, I.F. Stone and Paul Sweezy. Reception and entertainment. District 1199 Auditorium, 310 West 43rd St., 2-6 p.m. \$2.50 contribution. For further information or advance tickets write S.S.C., 301 W. 105th St., NYC 10025. Make checks payable to S.S.C. Sponsored by Solidarity Support Campaign.

Bomb

Continued from page 18

to living organisms than gamma rays, there would be more leukemia expected at Hiroshima than Nagasaki. However, recent recalculations of the Hiroshima neutron fluxes at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory indicate that the neutron fluxes at Hiroshima were overestimated. If this is so, then the leukemia incidence at Hiroshima was caused by gamma ray exposure and not neutrons. This gives very strong support to the hypothesis that there is no safe level for gamma ray exposure.

The Hiroshima and Nagasaki report documents the occurrence of numerous other physical ailments of the survivors. It

also reports on the social and psychological effects of the bombings. It is shown that the bomb survivors have to this day higher unemployment rates, higher layoff ratios, higher job-change rates, and lower job classifications than the rest of the Japanese population. These findings are combined with the conclusions of psychologists who find that many of the victims have never regained full emotional equilibrium.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the description of how the victims and their supporters struggled to attain recognition of the uniqueness of their circumstance. The U.S. occupation forces furnished some relief in the months following the surrender, but it was official policy that there were no long-term effects from nuclear weapons different from the effects of conventional weapons.

This policy was echoed by the Japanese post-war government, which argued that the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were to be treated no differently than the victims of the incendiary bombings of Tokyo.

The last section of the book chronicles the three-decade struggle, which still continues, to recognize the special significance of the events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Dozens of support committees formed, merged, grew, fragmented and reformed during that time. Without this atmosphere of public concern, most of the research reported in this book would not have been done.

Robert Nelson, an astronomer, co-chairs the Los Angeles Federation of Scientists. He recently co-authored a report on the effects of nuclear war in Los Angeles.

CULTURE SHOCK

INTEREST RATES

EASY SOLUTIONS TO DIFFICULT PROBLEMS

A Canadian businessman, Peter Riggan (vp of Noranda Mines), wants the government to stop publishing consumer price index reports. He says they create "discontent and tension" among employees, and cause them to ask

for more money. (Zodiac)

FRANKNESS

Housing Secretary Samuel Pierce said on July 21 that Reagan policies will cause suffering for the poor but that without those policies the middle class would also suffer. (He warned that a situation "worse than the Great Depression" would otherwise ensue.)

THEN AND NOW

John Dean, former star of Watergate hearings, is now on the other end of the media business. He heads a production company producing TV programs.

SOME CALL IT GROWN-UP

Both *Penthouse* and *Playboy* have announced cable TV series. "TV has finally come of age," crowed *Penthouse's* banner at a recent convention.

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PUBLICATIONS

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STAFFER for Labor Notes, newsletter for union activists, reformers. Self-starter with knowledge of labor movement and writing experience. Affirmative Action applied. Write: Labor Notes, Box 20031, Detroit, MI 48220. (313) 883-5501.

CANVASS DIRECTOR—and organizer to follow up canvass for anti-nuclear waste dump campaign. \$9,000 per year each. Send resume to: Perlman, CAHD, Box 553, Albuquerque, NM 87103.

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ADMINISTRATOR for San Francisco community coalition. Duties: fundraising, clerical supervision, financial management, developing membership base and coordinating community organizing campaigns. Salary: \$1,500-\$1,750 month. Send resume to: North of Market Planning Coalition, 225 Eddy, San Francisco, CA 94102.

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"THE MORAL MAJORITY IS NEITHER," "U.S. Out of El Salvador," "Stop the Arms Race Not the Human Race," "Question Authority". Buttons, Bumperstickers \$1/two; \$6/twenty Bumperstickers, \$5/twenty Buttons. Donnelly/Coit, Box 271-IT, New Vernon, NJ 07976.

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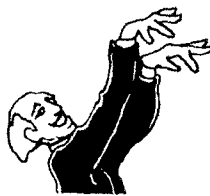
CATALOGS AVAILABLE—Labor & Radical History, Economics, Medieval History. Free search service. Bolerium Books, 931A Judah, San Francisco, CA 94122.

"LA LUZ"—True story of lesbian land community. \$5.00, Juana, 11 W. South, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

ORGANIZATIONS

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By Greg Moyer and Mark Mayell

IF ANYONE DOUBTS THE LEADING role soft drinks have played in reshaping the American diet over the past two decades, consider these figures:

- The average man, woman, and child in the United States drank 410 12-ounce soft drinks last year—up from 128 in 1960. That's equivalent to nearly 40 gallons per person, or an average of 13 ounces a day.

- In 1971, sodas surpassed coffee as America's most popular drink. With a sales curve that looks like the trajectory of a Minuteman missile, soft drinks continue to steal a larger share of the beverage market. By 1979, they accounted for over a third of the U.S. beverage dollar.

- A single food source, soda pop, now provides about eight percent of the calories consumed daily by the average person. Virtually all those calories come from our leading food additive—sugar. Sodas account for roughly 25 percent of our refined sugar consumption, the largest contributor among all food groups.

- The soft-drink industry cashed in last year at \$17 billion wholesale—or, at the retail level, the equivalent of \$100 per person per year.

Soft drinks originated as obscure patent medicines in the Civil War-ravaged South. When John Styth Pemberton, a druggist and former Confederate soldier, first added an extract from the African kola nut to an extract from coca, he had no idea that his "brain tonic" would push sales for the Coca-Cola Company to \$5.9 billion a century later.

How many people realize that a 12-ounce can of Coke contains 9.2 teaspoons of sugar? Would anyone sprinkle that amount of this controversial white crystal over a bowl of cereal or dissolve it into a tall glass of iced tea? Today, 65 percent of the refined sugar consumed by Americans is delivered through the products of food and beverage manufacturers.

The soft drink trade association takes the position that sodas are "strictly for refreshment." But other than dental caries, sugar may be linked to several degenerative diseases. In a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services, the Center for Science in the Public Interest cites research that suggest sugar is tied to nutrient deficiencies, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and behavioral disorders. CSPI asked the government to reevaluate the "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS) status of the food additive.

Caffeine and chemicals.

In 1906, the federal government called Coca-Cola on the carpet for using caffeine in its ever-popular beverage. Only four years earlier, the company had agreed to drop cocaine from its ingredient list after years of concerted criticism from the medical community.

sugar,
everywhere
and lots and
lots
to drink

The controversy over caffeine has intensified as more and more children drink Coke. It's no longer unusual to find infants weaned from baby formula only to be given soda pop. A study published in the February 1981 *Food Technology* showed 40 percent of one- and two-year-olds average nine ounces of soft drinks a day. The caffeine intake ranges from 31 milligrams (mgs) for Coke to 46 mgs for Dr. Pepper. (A cup of percolated coffee contains 110 mgs of caffeine.)

The Food and Drug Administration is proposing to take caffeine off the list of GRAS food additives, and assign it an "interim" status. That step would keep caffeine on the market as an additive, but start a series of tests to further evaluate the health impact of the substance.

Other additives endanger soft drinks as well. Without brominated vegetable oils (BVOs) some soft drinks would appear thin; their flavoring oils would form a ring around the neck of the bottle. In 1969 a Canadian study found that rats fed high concentrations of BVOs for 80 days suffered heart, liver, thyroid, testicle and kidney damages and changes. An English study shortly thereafter showed that BVO can accumulate in animal tissues.

Eventually the FDA removed BVOs from the GRAS list, and set a limit of 15 parts per million (ppm) for BVOs in foods and beverages. The order reduced BVO in some soft drinks 20-fold.

At least two major soft drinks, Orange Crush and Mello Yello, still use BVOs in their formulas, despite safer alternatives.

Come alive.

What ignited the soft drink explosion? The twin factors largely responsible for the recent burst in sales appear to be ever more clever promotion and increased availability.

As Jerry Stevens, executive editor of the trade journal *Beverage Industry* told the National Brewers and Beverage Packaging Association, "In the American public consciousness, soft drinks are a social amenity—a delightful interlude. Something that goes well with friends, something that is friendship, something that tastes like love...something that makes you feel good, better, wonderful, groovy, alive, with it, vibrant, zesty, turned on, and just plain happy."

These perceptions are the outgrowth of shrewd and aggressive marketing that has been the hallmark of the soda industry since its inception. By 1912, the Advertising Club of America had already cited Coca-Cola for marketing the best advertised product in America.

The man who coined one of the most successful slogans in corporate history, "Things Go Better With Coke," spoke succinctly about the goals of his client when he said, "The product of the Coca-Cola Company is not Coca-Cola—that makes itself. The product of the Coca-

Cola Company is advertising."

Past soft drink campaigns offer textbook examples of advertising at its most effective. In 1969 Pepsi-Cola research showed that its successful slogan, "Come Alive, You're in the Pepsi Generation," had lost its impact to rally a nation that had become engulfed in domestic strife and was fighting an unpopular war. The ad men huddled, and decided that "America should be extolled as a good place."

The result was the memorable "You've Got a Lot to Live, and Pepsi's Got a Lot to Give" sung in an upbeat gospel-rock style. In the words of Pepsi's president, the campaign focused on "the new national pastime—living and making every second count."

But advertising alone—no matter how skillfully plied—cannot account for skyrocketing sales. New forms of packaging, and merchandising are aspects of another significant factor: increased availability.

In 1976, the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Los Angeles sold 20 soft drink brands in 133 packages. That's a far cry from the old days when all Coke came in the universally recognized Georgia green returnable bottle.

Convenient "no deposit, no return" carry-home cartons, plastic containers and aluminum cans cater to the needs of different segments of a diverse market. The new containers have worked wonders for supermarket sales: Pepsi-Cola is now the largest selling product of any kind on the supermarket shelf. About 60 percent of all soft drink purchases are made in food stores.

At the fast food restaurant Coca-Cola is winning hands down. One Coke executive claims to have cornered 80 percent of the 200,000 outlets. The purveyors of fast food are all smiles, too. They turn over a huge profit on a high-demand item. It only costs them about 2.5 cents to serve a cup of Coke.

And let us not forget vending machines. The number of soft drink vending machines in the U.S., according to annual censuses taken by *Vending Times*, now approaches two million, double the number of 20 years ago. One-third of every dollar put into a vending machine buys a soft drink. In 1979, Americans pumped some \$4.5 billion into the mechanical dispensers to receive over 15 billion cups, cans and bottles of soft drinks.

Since the total amount of liquid people consume holds roughly constant over time, we can predict the logical outcome of all this heady growth. If the spiralling soft drink consumption continues, by the year 2014 soft drinks will replace all other beverages in the American diet, including water.

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